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Washington

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THE

HISTORY

OF THE

REIGN OF GEORGE III.

TO THE

TERMINATION OF THE LATE WAR.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A VIEW OF THE PROGRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT OF ENGLAND, IN PROSPERITY AND STRENGTH, TO THE ACCESSION OF HIS MAJESTY.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY ROBERT BISSET, LL. D.

AUTHOR OF THE "LIFE OF BURKE," &c. &c.

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HISTORY

OF THE

REIGN OF GEORGE III.

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1784. General election.

BY dissolving the parliament, his majesty virtually asked the question, Did your late representatives speak your sense, or not? If they did, you will reelect them; if not, you will choose others. Thus interrogated, the greater part of the people answered, No; and a very considerable majority of members friendly to Mr. Pitt was returned. As far as popular opinion can be a test of either merit or demerit, it was decidedly favourable to the minister, and inimical to his opponents. The general conduct of Mr. Fox often has been erroneously estimated

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Contest for Westminster, and influence of a beautiful lady.

by those who considered defects, without comprehending the excellencies of his plans, acts, and character; but never was he less popular than after his India bill and contest with the sovereign. Still, however, he retained great favour in some parts of the kingdom, especially in Westminster, and his election was the most noted of any that occurred for the new parliament. The candidates were, lord Hood, who had so eminently distinguished himself with Rodney, Mr. Fox, and sir Cecil Wray; of whom the two last were the late members. Wray had been originally chosen through the interest of Mr. Fox, but now abandoned that gentleman and joined lord Hood. For several days, Mr. Fox was superior to either of his competitors; but his majority afterwards rapidly decreased, and he became inferior to sir Cecil Wray, who was far surpassed by the naval candidate. On the 11th day of the poll he was three hundred and eighteen behind Wray: but an interference now took place that changed the face of affairs. A lady of very high rank, still more eminent for beauty than for condition, one of our lovely countrywomen, who demonstrate that, in celebrating a Venus or a Helen, poets do not exceed nature and experience, warmly interested herself in the election of Mr. Fox, with a success far beyond the hopes of the favoured candidate. Animated by personal friendship, and inspired with an ardent zeal for what she conceived to be a public benefit, this exalted woman undertook a personal canvass in favour of the losing candidate, and was not to be deterred by any inconveniences of the pursuit, or by the strictures of the opposite party upon active efforts which were so efficacious towards the attainment of the object. Many voters indeed, though far from approving of Mr. Fox's political principles and conduct, could not withstand the fascinating eloquence of so impressive an advocate; they might have resisted the utmost efforts of the brilliant genius of an Erskine or a Sheridan, but could not withstand the brilliant eyes of the dutchess: these two great masters of the pathetic might have in vain attempted to canvass for their brother orator; persuasion sat on the lips and dimpled in the smiles of the beautiful Devonshire, pleading for her brother whig. Persons too callous to yield to the applica-

tion of beauty, were not without other avenues to their hearts, to which the fair friend of Mr. Fox did not fail to apply with effect. The candidate himself, extremely well qualified for cooperating with the efforts of his friends, was better known to the lower and more numerous classes of Westminster electors, than any other eminent person existing. He was naturally open, frank, unassuming, and popular in his manners, politically attended all the public meetings, and associated under the appearance of most intimate familiarity with tavernkeepers, mechanics, and tradesmen, and was, by a great number belonging to these classes, regarded with the warmest affection. He was, besides, connected with many of the principal inhabitants, whose personal exertions and influence were strenuously employed in his favour. After a contest of forty days, Mr. Fox was two hundred and thirty-five superior; but a scrutiny being demanded by sir Cecil Wray, and granted by the high bailiff, a return was not made. The orator, however, having been chosen by Scottish boroughs, had a voice in parliament.[a]

Meeting of parliament, and commencement of Mr. Pitt's efficient administration.

THE 16th of May was the day fixed for the meeting of the new parliament, in which Mr. Pitt, not twenty-five years of age, may be properly said to have commenced the chief executorial direction of British affairs. The probable conduct of a man in office depends upon his talents, dispositions, and habits, combined with the state of affairs relative to his employment, and his own clear and full comprehension of its nature, objects, means, and duties. If a minister takes an exact and complete survey of the actual condition of a nation, and rises to general views of

a The writer was one day present at this celebrated election, and being recently come to London, was forcibly struck with the free and easy terms on which some of the lower adherents of Mr. Fox, especially a party of butchers, accosted a personage of his transcendent superiority. It was not with the veneration due to so extraordinary talents from any rank, that those persons of the very humblest addressed Charles James Fox: it was the endearing terms of fond comrades, on a footing of perfect equality: "Charles my sweet boy; God "bless your black face! do not be afraid, my lad, WE *are your friends!*" The writer recollects, the same day, to have heard a very open avowal of corruption. Being in a bookseller's shop in Covent Garden, a woman, who it seems was a neighbour, coming in, was asked by the master of the house, If her husband had polled? No, she answered; we are told, votes will bear a higher price next week! The circumstances of this election, in a city wherein votes are so general, and of another in the same place four years after, are by no means favourable to the doctrine of certain political reformists, that universal suffrage would promote respectability and independence of elections.

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the chief constituents of national prosperity, bestowing application and perseverance either in the removal of evil or promotion of good, he must produce much greater benefit to the state, than he who regards and pursues only a part.

THE chief constituents of national prosperity are, first, the means of subsistence, through agriculture, mines, fisheries, manufactures, and commerce: secondly, defence in military and naval strength, for securing those advantages; comprehending also, connexions with foreign countries, when conducive either to benefit or security; thirdly, the preservation and improvement of that physical and moral character, which is best fitted for retaining and promoting the advantages; this head requires the encouragement of useful and liberal arts, and in every civilized and enlightened country the promotion of science and literature; fourthly, the gratification of prevalent habits of comfort and enjoyments, as far as depends upon government, unless restriction be necessary for the public good, and the liberty of the subject, without which, to generous and independent spirits, no other blessing of life can afford perfect enjoyment; fifthly, subsidiary to the rest, is provision for the continuance of these, as far as human foresight can extend.[b] A statesman of consummate wisdom may bestow a greater or less proportion of attention on one or another of these constituents, according to circumstances; but such a minister will have them all in his view. The peculiar situation of Britain, exhausted by the enormous expenses of her late ruinous war, and loaded with an immense public debt, rendered the promotion of trade and improvement of finance the most immediately urgent objects of legislative and ministerial consideration. Besides, at this time, the study of political economy occupied the greater number of scholars, moral and political philosophers, and almost every able and informed senator and statesman. Such disquisitions, originating in French ingenuity, had been corrected, en-

b This analysis the reader will perceive to be abridged from Gillies's Frederic, which appears to the author to exhibit a much juster and more comprehensive estimate of national advantage, than those, either of writers or counsellors, who should consider mere opulence, either private or public, or the aggregate of both, as the tests of national prosperity.

larged, and digested into a grand system, by British experience, knowledge, and deduction. Adam Smith was the framer of commercial science and the consequent inculcations; and his estimable work, indeed, was become the text book of political economists in the closet, the cabinet, and senate. A very eminent writer often gives a tone and fashion to the subjects which he treats, that procures them an attention, perhaps greater than may be justified by their comparative value among the various pursuits of life and constituents of happiness. Dwelling on the nature and causes of the wealth of nations, both theorists and politicians, by too exclusive attention to that one subject, have frequently been led into an imagination that the supreme constituent of national good was opulence; an idea totally inconsistent with a knowledge of human powers and enjoyments, the experience of happiness and the history of nations.[c] This very high estimation of wealth, as the supreme excellence of a country, cooperated with the mercantile character, so prevalent in Britain, and many in the various departments of active (especially trading) life considered commerce and finance as the principal objects of executorial conduct. Mr. Pitt, though too enlarged in his views to admit that opinion in the common extent, yet regarding trade, and especially revenue, as most immediately urgent in forming his plans for the first session of the new parliament, directed his mind chiefly to commerce and finance, and these constitute the principal subjects of his majesty's introductory speech to parliament.

The king's speech.

THE new parliament being met, Mr. Cornwall was chosen speaker, and on the 19th, his majesty opened the session by a speech from the throne; he declared the high satisfaction with which he met his parliament, after having recurred in so important a moment to the sense of his people. He entertained a just and confident reliance, that the assembly was animated with the sentiments of

c Compare, for instance, the Greeks and Persians, the Romans and Carthaginians, the Europeans and Hindoos. The heroes sent by poverty from the north, to the dastardly and enervated defenders of the riches of the south. These, in the monuments of Gillies, of Fergusson, and Gibbon, show how falsely a political reasoner would conclude, who should measure national glory and happiness by national receipts.

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loyalty and attachment to the constitution, which had been so fully manifested in every part of the kingdom. The objects particularly recommended to their attention, were the alarming progress of frauds in the revenue, the framing of such commercial regulations as were immediately necessary, and the providing for the good government of our possessions in the East Indies. Upon this subject parliament would not lose sight of the effect which the measures they adopted might have on our own constitution, and our dearest interests at home. He had no wish but to consult the prosperity of his people, by a constant attention to every object of national concern, by an uniform adherence to the true principles of our free constitution, and by supporting and maintaining in their just balance the rights and privileges of every branch of the legislature. An address conformable to the speech having been moved, a debate arose on the expressions of gratitude to the king, for having dissolved the late parliament: and an amendment was proposed, to leave out such parts of the address as referred to that subject, which was negatived by a great majority. As his majesty's speech implied a censure of the former parliament, and particularly of Mr. Fox's East India bill, Mr. Burke undertook the justification of opposition and the censure of their adversaries, and on the 14th of June made a motion for an address to the king, representing and vindicating the proceedings of the last parliament, and criminating the present ministers. The remonstrance[d] dwelt particularly on the rectitude and expedience of the late East India bill, and on the dreadful consequences likely to ensue from the dissolution. Though both the speech and proposed statement were replete with ingenuity, yet the main arguments being necessarily a repetition of what had been frequently urged before, the motion was negatived without a division. Firmly established as the minister, supported by the people through their recently appointed re-

d He said, he intended his motion as an epitaph on his departed friend, the last parliament; that he had, on some occasions, written long epitaphs to the memory of those that he honoured and respected; and, on the present occasion, he chose to follow the corpse to the sepulchre, and go through the ceremony of saying, "ashes to ashes, and dust to dust," in sure and certain hope, through the merit of the good works of the last parliament, that it would have a glorious and joyful resurrection, and become immortal.

presentatives, as well as chosen by the king, Mr. Pitt was called to exercise his talents for performing the duties of so arduous a situation. Although a year and a half had now elapsed since the conclusion of peace, the contentions of party had hitherto prevented the adoption of any effectual measures to recover the country from the miserable state to which it had been reduced by an expensive and ruinous war. Commerce was still stagnant, the national credit depressed, and the funds, after an interval of peace, at the lowest price of war; the public income unequal to the expenditure even in its full amount, was at present greatly diminished by fraud; and our important concerns in India without any effectual plan of beneficial arrangement: the country, so situated, required the efforts of the minister to raise drooping credit; to revive the funds; to promote the just and beneficial government of India; to improve the income, by suppressing fraudulent deduction, and by positive additions; to stimulate the national industry, enterprise, and skill, to the highest improvement of our mercantile capability; and to promote manufactures and commerce, the sources of public and private wealth. Such were the objects to which, partly the circumstances of the country, and partly the prevalent opinion of the times, called the attention of Mr. Pitt, who was just commencing an administration long and important; in which the counsels and conduct of the minister, whether wise or unwise, right or wrong, stamp the history of these realms, their dependencies and connexions, for the last sixteen years of the eighteenth century; an era more awfully momentous, involving greater and more extensive interests of enlightened, energetic, and efficacious MAN, than any century in the annals of human nature.

State of the empire when Mr. Pitt's ministry began.

Objects which he proposes to pursue.

THE first ministerial efforts of Mr. Pitt were directed to finance. Before he proceeded to new imposts, or new regulations for the advancement of revenue, he attempted to render the present taxes as productive as possible, by preventing the defalcations of fraud. He had bestowed very great pains in collecting information respecting the various subjects, modes, and details of smuggling. The former ministers having also in view the suppression of

His first efforts are directed to finance.

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this unlawful traffic, had in the last session proposed a committee for inquiring into those illicit practices; three reports were delivered, containing very ample materials; and Mr. Eden, chairman of the committee, having employed his usual industry and acuteness in investigating these minute and complicated topics, had moved the following resolution, declaratory of the result, That the illicit practice had greatly increased; the public revenue was annually defrauded to the extent of not less than two millions; and these enormities and national losses merited the early and serious attention of the legislature. Soon after the meeting of the new parliament, the subjects of these reports, and of the laws in being for the prevention of smuggling, were referred to a committee of the whole house. On the second of June, the chancellor of the exchequer moved for leave to bring in a bill for the more effectual prevention of smuggling. The objects of the proposition were, to extend the bounds of the hovering laws, which had limited the distance from shore within which seizures could be made; to prevent ships from carrying arms, without a license from the admiralty; smuggling ships once captured were never to be returned; ships of a certain description adapted to smuggling, were never to be built; and clearances were to be regulated, so as to prevent ships clearing out in ballast, and afterwards going on the smuggling trade. In the progress of the bill, a variety of improvements were suggested; and after considerable discussion, it passed into a law.

Bill for the prevention of smuggling.

Among various articles of illicit trade, the principal commodity was tea. It had appeared before the committee on smuggling, that only five millions five hundred thousand pounds of tea were sold annually by the East India company, whereas the annual consumption of the kingdom was believed to exceed twelve millions; so that the contraband traffic in this article was more than double the legal. The remedy which the ministers devised for this evil, was to lower the duties on tea to so small an amount, as to make the profit inadequate to the risk. In this trade the rate of freight and insurances to the shore was about 25 per cent., and the insurance on the inland carriage about 10 per cent. more; in all 35 per cent.

Commutation act.

The duty on tea, as it then stood, was about 50 per cent.; so that the smuggler had an advantage over the fair dealer of 15 per cent. As this regulation would cause a deficiency in the revenue of about 600,000l. *per annum*. he proposed to make good the same by an additional window tax. This tax (he said) would not be felt as an additional burden, but ought to be considered as a *commutation*, and would prove favourable to the subject.[e] But the principal benefit which he expected from this measure, was the absolute ruin of the smuggling trade, which subsisted almost entirely on the profit of their teas. Another benefit would be, the timely and necessary relief it would afford to the East India company. By this regulation they would find a vent for thirteen, instead of five, millions of pounds of tea and would be enabled to employ twenty more large ships in their service. This was the bill since so well known under the title of the COMMUTATION ACT.

Arguments against and for it.

OPPOSITION in both houses denied this tax to be commutative: tea, though a commodity of general use, still was an article of luxury; whereas the admission of light into houses was indispensably necessary; and thus all persons, whether they drank tea or not, were compelled to pay a tax. The gain to the company might be considerable, but must be derived from the people, without any return; the present was a new and positive tax, and not a substitution of one for another. This bill was farther censured, as a measure of finance; tea, it was said, was a most eligible object for taxation, which produced to the revenue near a million sterling annually. If once given up, it could never be recovered, and five times the quantity of tea consumed yearly that had formerly been used, by the new duty would not produce an equal revenue. It was farther contended, that it would not affect the suppression of illicit traffic; the price of tea, on the continent was 7 1-2 per cent. cheaper than at the company's sales, and 5 per cent. was allowed to the company;

e A house (he said), for instance, of nine windows, which would be rated at 10s. 6d., might be supposed to consume seven pounds of tea; the difference between the old duties on which, and the new duty proposed, might at an average amount to 1l. 5s. 10d.; so that such a family would gain by the commutation 15s. 4d.

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these added to the 12 1-2 per cent. duty, it was asserted, would be a sufficient compensation for all the risks incurred by the smuggler. Mr. Pitt combatted these objections: he denied that tea was a certain and permanent object of revenue; the present state of finance and public credit did not permit him to barter a certainty for an uncertainty; he was obliged to select an object on which he could build the most entire and confident expectation; and with the invaluable benefits that would result from this measure to the public, notwithstanding the industry with which popular odium was attempted to be stirred up against it, he was ready to risk any unpopularity which it might occasion. The bill was passed by a majority of one hundred and forty-eight to forty.

Regulation of duties on British spirits.

A THIRD bill was also passed into a law for the regulation of duties upon British spirits, and to discontinue during a limited time certain imposts upon rum and spirits imported from the West Indies. These three bills comprehended the whole plan of Mr. Pitt upon the subject of smuggling, as far as it was now submitted to parliament. The effect of the scheme for preventing contraband trade, including several improvements which subsequent experience devised, has been almost the annihilation of that species of fraud, to the great benefit of the revenue[f] and of morals. The commutation act being misinterpreted and misrepresented both by ignorance and sophistical ingenuity, caused at first some dissatisfaction; that, however, was not of long continuance, and the additional duty on windows came to be paid without reluctance.

Preliminary motions for the relief of the East India company.

MEANWHILE East India affairs occupied the attention of the minister and parliament; a committee was appointed to collect information; and its report being presented was taken into consideration by a committee of the whole house. A bill was proposed, for enabling the company to make a half yearly dividend at the rate of eight per cent. for the year, and passed both houses, with considerable opposition in the house of lords, in which it was said that

f Visitors of the watering places, or other parts of the coast, who have conversed with elderly or middle aged watermen, or any kind of seafaring men, in those places, must have perceived that they considered smuggling, heretofore their most lucrative occupation, as having received its death blow from the hands of Mr. Pitt.

the company's affairs could not afford such a dividend.[g] On the second of July, Mr. Pitt introduced a bill for the relief of the company: this proposition was to allow the company a further respite of duties due to the exchequer, to enable them to accept bills beyond the amount prescribed by former acts of parliament, and to establish their future dividends. The proposed indulgence was, that the duties now due should be paid by instalments, at Midsummer and Christmas 1785. The principle of the projected accommodation, was the solvency of the company at the specified terms. Mr. Pitt, in supporting the measure, informed the house, that from the late inquiries which he had made into the state of the company's finances, and from the very ample and satisfactory accounts he had obtained, he had no room to admit the remotest idea, that they would not, at the period he had mentioned be able to fulfil every engagement. India would now enjoy peace, and parliament would enforce the active economy which the present state of affairs so strongly recommended; a few years of tranquillity, and a system of exertion and frugality, would render our Indian possessions affluent and prosperous. Opposition doubted the favourable prospect of the company's affairs, and objected to the relief proposed. A question was started, Whether or not parliament, by authorizing acceptances of bills guaranteed their validity? Mr. Pitt contended that they did not; Mr. Fox that they did, at least so far as to pledge the national honour to their responsibility, by allowing the acceptance which they had a right to restrain. The sanction of parliament impressed the public with an opinion of their goodness, and established their credit. Mr. Dundas illustrated the subject, by reminding the house of the circumstances in which the restriction had originated. By the regulating bill of 1773, the public were to come in for a share in the profits of the company: in order, therefore to prevent the appropriation of any part of their profits to the payment of bills that might be fraudulently sent over from India, it had been thought necessary to restrain the amount of those bills; consequently, when a

[g] Parliamentary Journals.

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parliament should consent to the acceptance of bills to a greater amount, it resigned, in behalf of the public, so much of the national claim to the dividends, as was secured to them by the bill of 1773. The bill passed without a division.

THESE measures were preparatory and subordinate to the bill of the minister for the government of India, which he now introduced, similar in object and principle to the scheme that he had proposed in January, but more detailed in its provisions, and more extensive in its applications.

Bill for the regulation of India.

On the 6th of July, Mr. Pitt proposed his bill for the better regulation of India: in his prefatory oration he stated the magnitude of the subject; and described the vast accession of power which the wealth of India had for a series of years added to the empire of Great Britain: our former opulence was owing to the prudent management of our commercial concerns; and our future hopes depended on the judicious regulations that were now to be introduced for the government of that country. The leading object was to correct and restrain abuses, remedy evils, improve the condition of British India, and thereby augment the opulence and prosperity of this country, by powers adequate to those important purposes, without being so great as to endanger the balance of the constitution. The bill undertook to institute a new system of government at home, and to regulate the different presidencies abroad; to provide for the happiness of the natives, and to put an end to their misunderstandings and controversies; to establish a new judicature for trying offences committed in India, and by strictness of government to prevent delinquency. The proposed change at home was nearly the same that has appeared in the narrative.[h] It proposed to leave the management of commercial affairs to the company, and to vest the territorial possessions in a board of control. Abroad the supreme council and governor general were to have an absolute power of originating orders to the inferior presidencies, in cases that did not interfere with the directions already received from Britain, and of suspending

h See vol. ii. chap. xxxi.

members of the other councils in case of disobedience. The supreme government was restrained from offensive war or alliances, without orders from home; the subordinate settlements were prohibited from forming even defensive treaties, but with a conditional clause, which would render their permanency dependent on the ratification of the governor general; the servants of the company were required to transmit accounts of all considerable transactions to the council of Bengal, and the supreme council to convey speedy intelligence to Britain of every important occurrence. In considering the comfort and security of the natives, inquiry was ordered to be instituted by the different presidencies into the expulsions of hereditary farmers, and the oppressive rents and contributions that might have been extorted; and measures were directed to be employed for their relief and future tranquillity. Various regulations were added, respecting the debts of the nabob of Arcot, and the rajah of Tanjore, to private individuals and to the company. The bill further required an examination into the different establishments of the presidencies, for the purposes of retrenchment, and an annual report of the same to be transmitted to Britain. The proposition also contained both the description of delinquency, and the judicial establishments for its cognisance and punishments. Crimes committed by English subjects in any part of India, were made amenable to every British court of justice, in the same manner as if they had been committed in our immediate dominions. Presents, except such as were merely ceremonial, were forbidden to be received, unless by a counsellor at law, a physician, a surgeon, or a chaplain, under the penalty of confiscation of the present, and an additional fine, at the discretion of the court. Disobedience of orders, unless absolutely necessary, and pecuniary transactions, contrary to the interests of the company, were declared to be high crimes and misdemeanors. The company were forbidden to interfere in favour of any person legally condemned of the above crimes, or to employ him in their service for ever. The governors of the several presidencies were empowered to imprison any person suspected of illicit correspondence, and to send him to

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England if they judged it necessary. Every person serving in India was required, within two months after his return to England, to deliver in upon oath to the court of exchequer, an inventory of his real and personal estates, and a copy thereof to the court of directors, for the inspection of the proprietors; and should the validity of the account be doubted, on any complaint to that effect made by the board of control, the court of directors, or three proprietors possessing India stock to the amount of 10,000l. conjunctively, the court of exchequer were required to examine upon oath the person accused, and to imprison him until he should have satisfactorily answered interrogatories. Neglect or concealment were to be punished by the imprisonment of the defendant, the forfeiture of all his estates, both real and personal, and an incapacity of ever serving the company. For the more speedy and effectual prosecution of persons in Great Britain, charged with crimes committed in India, a court was established, to consist of three judges, nominated respectively by the chancery, king's bench, and common pleas, four peers taken from a list of twenty-six, and six commoners from a list of forty (the lists to be chosen by ballot from their respective houses), a certain number of whom should be subject to peremptory challenge both by the prosecutor and the defendant. The judgment of the court was to extend to imprisonment, fine, and incapacity of serving the company. Such are the outlines of Mr. Pitt's legislative, executorial and judicial arrangement for the government of India.

Arguments against the bill.

Opposition reprobated the bill, on the grounds of insufficiency for the regulation of India, and dangerously extending the patronage of the crown. Many objections were also made to particular clauses; the new tribunal was said to be in truth a screen for delinquents, since no man was to be tried but on the accusation of the company or the attorney general; he had only to conciliate government, in order to attain perfect security. The obligation to swear to the amount of property, and the powers granted to the courts of enforcing interrogatories, tended to compel persons to criminate themselves, and were modes of inquisitorial proceedings unknown to the subjects of this island. It was confidently denied that there was any

necessity for so alarming a departure from the established principles and practice of the constitution; and it was therefore presumed that it could have been done with no other than a corrupt view, to draw the rich and powerful servants of the East India company into a dependence upon the crown for its protection. Mr. Fox directed the force of his eloquence against this measure of his rival. "It prepares (said the orator) feebleness at home by a "division of power; if there be a receipt, a nostrum, for "making a weak government, it is by giving the power of "contriving measures to one, and the nomination of the "persons who are to execute them to another. Theories "that do not connect men with measures, are not theories "for this world; they are chimeras with which a recluse "may divert his fancy, but not principles on which a "statesman would found his system. But, say the min-"isters, the negative provides against the appointment "of improper officers; the commissioners have a nega-"tive, therefore they have full power. Here then is the "complete annihilation of the company, and of the so "much vaunted chartered rights. The bill is a scheme of "dark and delusive art, and takes away the claims of the "company by slow and gradual sap. The first assumption "made by the minister, is the power of superintendance "and control; and what is the meaning of this power? "Does it mean such a superintendance and control as this "house possesses over ministers? No; for this house has "not the power of giving official instructions. It is to "be an active control, it is to originate measures; and this "is the next step. At last, to complete the invasion, or-"ders may be secretly conveyed to India by the commis-"sioners, at the very moment they were giving their open "countenance to instructions to be sent from the directors "of an opposite tendency. To suffer such a scheme "of dark intrigue will be a farce, a child's play, and does "not deserve the name of a government. To this pro-"gressive and underhand scheme, I peremptorily object. "If it were right to vest the powers of the court of direc-"tors in a board of privy counsellors, at any rate it should "be done openly. A great nation ought never to descend "to gradual and insidious encroachment. Let them do

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"what they wished for explicitly, and show the company, "that what they dare to do, they dare to justify."

Arguments for it.

THE minister declared his conviction, that the ordinary courts of justice were inadequate to the cognisance of Indian delinquency; and that there were many crimes committed there, for which the common law had provided no redress: at the same time he did not conceive, that the principle on which he proceeded was so totally unknown in the jurisprudence of this kingdom: it was recognised in the whole code of martial law. As to the influence of the crown, he trusted he had sufficiently guarded against any such apprehensions, by the mode directed for the constitution of the new court of judicature. The whole plan was efficient to every good purpose, and guarded against the evil which must have resulted from the scheme of Mr. Fox. The bill passed both houses by very great majorities.

Comparison of the two bills as resulting from the characters of their authors.

IN the characters of Messrs. Pitt and Fox a diversity has been remarked, which may perhaps account for a striking difference in their respective systems. Energetic as Mr. Fox is in power, he is not always proportionably guarded and considerate in the exertions of his faculties; hence, though his judgment be exquisite, his actually exerted discrimination does not uniformly keep pace with the strength of his invention: Mr. Pitt, on the other hand, powerful as he is in force, is extremely circumspect and discriminate, as to the extent and bounds of operation most conducive to the purpose. Mr. Fox, adopting a principle in itself right, often adopts it too implicitly, and carries its application to a greater extent than the exact case justifies. Mr. Pitt much more accurately fixes the line of demarcation, which the principle with the existing case requires. The India bill of 1783, considered in relation to certain ends, was ably, skilfully, and effectually devised; but attending to efficacy, its author neglected control. The wheels strongly constructed, but wanting the drag, by the force and rapidity of their motion, might have overturned and crushed the constitution. The plan of 1784, in forming a power for specific use, guarded more cautiously against eventual abuse.

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DURING this session, the Westminster election occupied considerable attention; a scrutiny having been granted by the high bailiff, at the instance of sir Cecil Wray, the unsuccessful candidate, its legality was questioned by Mr. Fox: according to that gentleman, the election ought to have been referred to a committee, under Mr. George Grenville's bill. The discussion produced an astonishing display of legal ability and knowledge, both from Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox; when the question was put, the arguments of the former were found to have prevailed, and the scrutiny was ordered to be continued.

Debate on the Westminster election.

A VERY humane and equitable measure was this session proposed by Mr. Dundas, indeed equally meritorious as a scheme of individual justice and national policy; this was the restoration of the estates forfeited in the Scottish rebellions to the representatives of the sufferers. He enlarged on the wisdom and justice of the principle, and adducing the opinion of a Chatham as an authority in favour of his arguments, he quoted the celebrated passage in one of that illustrious orator's speeches, which describes the merits of the Scotch highlanders. He drew an auspicious omen from reflecting, that the first blow had been given the proscription by the earl of Chatham; and trusted, that the remains of a system, which, whether dictated at first by narrow views or by sound policy, ought certainly to be temporary, would be completely annihilated under the administration of his son.

Mr Dundas proposes the restoration of the forfeited estates.

A law is passed for that purpose.

HE made the panegyric of persons under this predicament, who had distinguished themselves in the last war. He said there was not one of those families, in which some person had not atoned for the errors of his ancestors, and spilt his blood in his country's cause; and he would boldly assert, that the spirit which had rendered the inhabitants of the highlands disaffected to the present government, had long since disappeared, and that the king had not at this moment a set of more loyal subjects in his dominions. It would be magnanimity to treat them like true and faithful subjects, and cancel for ever the offences of their ancestors; nor would the liberality of the proceeding be greater than its policy. The spirit of emigration in the highlanders was such, that nothing could extinguish

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it but the return of their long lost patrons, and the affection and reverence which the inhabitants of that part of the island felt for their natural lords. It was obvious, that a property held for the benefit of the public, was not so well managed as if possessed by private proprietors: the restoration of the estates would tend very much to the improvement and prosperity of the country. The bill experienced some opposition in the house of lords; the objections proceeded not from the substance, but the lateness of the season, and the form in which it was introduced; all these, however, were overruled, and it was passed into a law.

Labours of Mr Pitt in investigating the public accounts.

Mr. Pitt found himself necessarily engaged in the laborious business of winding up the accounts of the war, and was compelled, by the burden of floating debt, and the general state of the national finances, to negotiate a loan, though in time of peace; but as this measure was obviously unavoidable, in order to make the terms as favourable as possible, instead of granting enormous profit to private or political favourites, he disposed of it to the best bidders. The sum borrowed was six millions: the taxes were chiefly upon articles of accommodation and ornament in dress, furniture, and equipage, or postage, by the restrictions of franking, with some additional duties on liquors. The principle of impost with which he set out, was to bear as lightly as possible on the poorer classes: besides this loan, there was a large debt unfunded, chiefly in navy and exchequer bills, and ordnance debentures. Of these six million six hundred thousand pounds were funded, and the rest necessarily deferred to the following year. On the 2d day of August, the session was ended, by a speech from the throne; in which his majesty expressed his warmest thanks for the eminent proofs exhibited by parliament of zealous and diligent attention to the public service. The happiest effects were declared to be expected from the provision made for the better government of India, and from the institution of a tribunal so peculiarly adapted to the trial of offences committed in that distant country. The sovereign observed with great satisfaction, the laws which were passed for the preservation and improvement of the revenue. He applauded the zeal and

Supplies.

Loan and taxes.

liberality with which the house of commons had provided for the exigencies of the state, though he felt and regretted the necessity in which their exertions originated. A definitive treaty, the king informed the house, was concluded between Britain and the states general; and the aspect of affairs, as well as the positive assurances from foreign powers, promised a continuance of general tranquillity.

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Britain resumes her attention to the affairs of the continent.—State of foreign powers.—Situation and views of Catharine.—Character and conduct of the emperor Joseph.—Catharine courts his alliance.—Treaty between these princes.—Catharine's invasion of the Crimea.—Seizure of that country.—Measures of internal improvement.—It is the interest of Russia to cultivate amity with Britain.—Catharine's conduct to Britain not consistent with her usual wisdom.—Reforming projects of the emperor.—Suppression of religious orders.—Schemes of naval and commercial aggrandizement.—Dismantles the fortresses of the Netherlands.—Proposes to open the Scheldt.—The emperor prefers his claims.—Arguments on both sides.—Joseph's allegations entirely contrary to justice.—The Dutch prepare to defend their rights.—Russia supports the pretensions of the emperor.—Prussia and France unfriendly to the emperor's demands.—Britain disposed to protect Holland.—Britain's speedy recovery from the evils of war.—Flourishing commerce.—Miscellaneous occurrences.—Death of Dr. Johnson, and a short view of literature and science at his decease.—Improvements of the present age in natural philosophy and chemistry.—Invention of air balloons.—Ascent of Lunardi from the Artillery ground.—General astonishment of the metropolis at this phenomenon.

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1784. Britain resumes her attention to the affairs of the continent.

FOR the last twenty years, England had been so much engaged in her own intestine and colonial dissensions, and afterwards with the American war and its consequences, that she bestowed much less attention on the general concerns of Europe, than at any former period of her history since the revolution. From the commencement of Mr. Pitt's administration, while recovering her internal prosperity, she resumed her importance among

foreign nations. During the remaining portion of our narrative, her interests became so interwoven with those of continental powers, that the general state of Europe must occupy a larger share of the history than has been hitherto necessary.

State of foreign powers.

THE empress of Russia had not been engaged in any great war since the peace concluded in 1774 with Turkey; she nevertheless was actively employed in schemes of external aggrandizement, as well as of internal improvement. Catharine's objects were to extend over Germany, and her more northern vicinity, her influence and power, so much increased by her acquisitions in Poland; on the other side to make herself mistress of the Turkish empire, through the extent of coast which she should then possess on the Euxine and the Mediterranean: in addition to her maritime territories in the north, she proposed to attain a commercial and naval eminence, proportioned to her territorial power, rapidly increase the value of her immense dominions, and become decidedly superior to every other sovereign. The end was grand, nor were the means ill adapted. At peace herself, she had carefully surveyed the circumstances, situation, and character of other states and princes. As the supreme obstacle to maritime exaltation would be Britain, the confederacy formed against the mistress of the ocean was consonant to her wishes, and, without open and direct hostilities, she endeavoured to promote its success. This naturally produced a connexion between her and France, the ancient ally of Turkey, the chief object of Catharine's ambition. The sagacious empress, penetrating into the characters of other princes, availed herself of either their strength or weakness, and applied to their ruling passions to gratify her own. The king of Prussia, she well knew, she never could render an instrument for effecting her purposes, though she might procure him as a coadjutor when cooperation with Russia suited his own. She was aware that he would instantly dive into her designs, and effectually obstruct them if they were likely ever remotely to interfere with his interests. Besides, in her principal scheme, his cooperation could not directly advance her designs, even if he were so disposed. From the situa-

Situation and views of Catharine.

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tion and power of his dominions, the emperor would be the most effectual auxiliary; and to his personal character, she did not doubt she could apply with success. Joseph was fond of distinction, without the means of acquiring it by great and meritorious qualities. Ardently desirous of increasing his power, without solid and vigorous capacity to gratify his favourite passion, he was one of those secondary characters, bustling, busy, and active, which in all ages and ranks have been efficacious tools, moved and guided by superior ability. Joseph, she well knew, from his power and vicinity, would be a most useful instrument in her designs upon Turkey, either of encroachment, which she at the time meditated, or of subjugation, which though at a more distant period she no less firmly intended. That she might the more readily win over Joseph to second her views, in the year 1780 she requested a personal conference; they met at Mohilof, and there Catharine thoroughly confirmed the opinion which she had conceived of his abilities and character, and after having impressed him with the highest opinion of her own genius and accomplishments she appeared to make him the repository of her most secret designs. She represented to him the advantages that would accrue to both empires from a close political union; and the practicability that, by such a connexion, they might share the spoils of Turkey, and each acquiring both an extensive and productive accession of dominions contiguous to their respective territories, their concert, when so increased in power, would enable them to direct the affairs of the German empire. Joseph very readily acceded, both to the expediency of the object, and feasibility of the plan. It was agreed that Catharine should return to her capital, and that Joseph, after making a circuitous tour through the Russian provinces, should repair to Petersburgh. There they more completely digested their schemes, and a firm alliance was established between the two imperial sovereigns.

Character and projects of the emperor Joseph.

Catharine courts his alliance,

and a treaty is concluded.

Catharine's invasion of the Crimea.

CATHARINE found that from the late cessions in Turkey she derived great and rapid advantages; her commerce on the Black Sea daily extended its progress; the Russian vessels passed the Dardanelles, and went to traffic at

Aleppo, at Smyrna, and in the Italian ports. By so great and increasing benefits, the desire of Catharine was inflamed to extend the kind of possessions from which they arose. The Crimea, so well known in ancient history and poetry as the Taurica Chersonesus, the scene of exquisite tragedy, is a peninsula which projects into the Euxine from the Palus Mœtis, or the sea of Azoff. This country, celebrated for its fertility and commerce, and filled with populous towns and cities, was formerly a dependency upon Turkey, and had been, at the last peace, declared to be a neutral principality, under one of the Tartarian kahns, or chieftains. The empress studiously fomented dissensions between the ruling prince and his brother, a pretender to the sovereignty, expecting that the former, whom she professed to favour and protect, would implore her assistance, and thus afford a pretext for sending Russian troops into the Crimea. The Tartar solicited the assistance of Catharine, as that ambitious princess desired. The empress, secure of meeting no interruption from Joseph, and well knowing the feebleness of the Turks, invaded the peninsula with a powerful army, still professing that her intention was to relieve the kahn. She left him the shadow of power; but taking all the substance to herself, she became absolute mistress of the Crimea. Having ascertained the success of the iniquitous invasion, she published one of those manifestoes, in which modern aggressors and conquerors render due homage *in words* to that justice and rectitude which THEIR ACTIONS are grossly violating. In this curious monument of imperial reasoning she affirmed, that her successes in the late war had given her a right to the Crimea, which from her sincere desire of peace she had sacrificed to the wishes of the Ottoman Porte; that she had proposed the happiness of the Crimeans by procuring to them liberty and independence, under the authority of a chief elected by themselves. But those benevolent wishes had been grievously disappointed: revolt and rebellion had arisen; to suppress which, and restore tranquillity and happiness, from the same philanthropic motives she had been induced, at a very great expense of money and loss of troops, to interfere, for the beneficent purpose of preventing the recurrence of such evils; and had undertaken,

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Seizure of that country.

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once for all, the firm resolution of terminating the troubles of the Crimea. The measures which she had employed, the manifesto farther affirmed, were also intended to perpetuate the peace between Russia and the Porte. In this bountiful display of virtue, seeking the temporal comforts of its objects, Catharine did not forget their eternal happiness, and promised her new subjects a full and free toleration of their religion. The Turks were extremely enraged at this usurpation of Catharine, but did not at that time conceive themselves strong enough to commence hostilities.

Measures of internal improvement.

MEANWHILE the empress was engaged in improving her own country, and in connecting herself more closely with Joseph. In pursuing the former of these objects, she promoted manufactures, trade, voyages, and expeditions of discovery; particularly for exploring the resources of those dominions which were remote from the metropolis, and not under her own immediate inspection. She endeavoured as much as possible to facilitate communication between distant parts of Russia, and especially by water conveyance. She had projected to open a navigation between the White Sea and the Baltic, by a line of canals which should join the gulf of Finland, the lakes of Ladoga and Onega, and the river Dwina, and thus save traders with Archangel the dangerous voyage round cape North; but on a survey of the interjacent country, abounding with rocks and mountains, the scheme was judged to be impracticable. She attempted to establish an intercourse between her eastern and western dominions, by opening a canal between the Pruth, which falls into the Wolga, and the Mista, that communicates by lakes with a river which falls into the Baltic, that so there might be a commercial traffic carried on between the maritime regions of Europe, and the inland recesses of northern Asia; and this great design was fully accomplished.

It is the interest of Russia to cultivate amity with Britain.

THE policy of Russia respecting foreign alliances, was of much more questionable wisdom, than her schemes of internal improvement. The former princes of Muscovy had uniformly cultivated a close intercourse with England; desirous of naval and commercial aggrandizement, Catharine conceived that the trade and maritime power of Britain

were the chief obstructions to her own, and from this opinion rather discouraged than promoted amity with these realms. Were a person in private life to observe, that it is the interest of venders of commodities to cultivate a close connexion with their best customers, he would be charged with advancing a self-evident proposition, which no man in his senses could deny, either as an abstract truth, or as a prudent rule of conduct. Undeniable as it is, yet Catharine was not guided by this principle. The commerce with England is essential to Russia. No merchants, with smaller capitals, or less commercial spirit than the English, will or can advance such sums of money long before the period of return, to invigorate the manufactories, employ the people in a wide and poor country, and enable the small traders to bring their goods to market from remote districts. Without this application of British capital, industry ceasing to be productive, trade and manufactures would languish, and all the efforts of Catharine for stimulating the industry of her subjects, must become less valuable, in the proportion that her policy decreased the English market. Most of the articles that her dominions could supply, might be procured from America; and should repulsive conduct drive Britain from Russia into other channels of import, it would be a loss to her commerce, which from no other source she could compensate. Never could, or can, Russia profit by disagreement with England. Influenced, however, in this important instance by narrow, and unavailing jealousy, instead of her usual enlarged policy, she conducted herself inimically to the nation with which it was her chief interest to maintain the strictest friendship. She continued to cultivate an amicable correspondence with France, and the closest union with Joseph, whom she ardently seconded in schemes which now occupied the chief attention of Europe,

Her conduct to Britain not consistent with her usual wisdom.

Since the year 1781, Joseph II. by the death of his mother the empress queen, had been the sole sovereign of the Austrian dominions; and being now free from restraint, fully exhibited that character which was before discovered by the discerning, but had not yet been displayed to the world. Possessing lively but superficial talents, the emperor was extremely desirous of fame and

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Presuming projects of the emperor.

distinction. Without original genius to concert great schemes, Joseph was the creature of imitation, and had formed himself on the model of the king of Prussia, as far as his conception of that extraordinary character reached. Among many objects which called forth the exertion of Frederic's astonishing powers, two principally occupied his attention; the acquirement of productive territories, and the improvement of all his possessions, according to their physical, political and commercial resources, including the advancement of the general character of his subjects. His efforts ably, skilfully, and constantly directed to one or both of these objects, had been so successful as to raise Prussia from being a small and secondary principality, to the first rank among the powers of Europe. Joseph attempted both to improve and extend the Austrian possessions; his means did not, however, bear much resemblance to the designs of his archetype. Frederic directed his efforts to increase national prosperity in its various constituents: whatever opinions he himself might have formed on the subject of religion, he was far from judging it expedient to interfere with the established notions of his subjects, or to subvert any of those establishments, which either in themselves or by habitual associations, cherish sentiments of piety, the surest sources of both the private and public virtues which exalt a people. If he was a deist, he did not apprehend that his subjects would be the fitter without religion for either defending or improving his dominions. Like many others of no great talents, Joseph considered indifference to religion as a source of distinction; he was ostentatious in infidelity, and wished it, under the name of liberality, to spread through his territories. One measure which he adopted, was certainly in itself equitable; he disclaimed all dependence in secular affairs on the pope of Rome: he justly deemed it totally inconsistent with the rights and dignity of an independent sovereign, to acknowledge subordination to a foreign priest. The emperor greatly increased toleration in the various parts of his dominions, and in general extended religious liberty to Jews and all other sects and denominations. So far his policy appeared wise and liberal; but counsels and acts right in themselves,

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may be wrong as part of a general system. The emperor was a *reforming projector*, and in the ardour of his zeal for change, very far exceeded expediency: the suppression of the religious orders, and confiscation of their property, were the principal objects of his innovating plans. In 1782, he issued imperial decrees for suppressing monasteries, convents, and every species of religious fraternities or sisterhoods, and took possession of all their lands and moveables. A commission was established for the administration of the sequestered estates and effects, which were so considerable, that the most moderate calculators supposed that the emperor could gain four or five millions sterling by the reform.[i] Annual stipends were allotted for the maintenance of the reformed abbots, abbesses, canons, canonesses, monks and nuns, which were in some degree proportioned to their respective rank and condition; but it was heavily complained, that the portions were so scantily measured, as to be shamefully inadequate to the purpose. A reform, involving in it such an extensive robbery, was by no means applauded by distinguishing and wise men, as consistent with either justice or sound policy. The spoliation rendered the whole measure more particularly odious than it otherwise might have been; and whatever means were at home employed to stifle complaint, they could not restrain the censure of foreigners upon the conduct of this prince. Many conceived that his object was to plunder the church; that the pillage (instead of being applied to any useful or benevolent purpose) was intended merely for the support of his ambitious projects; and that he had concerted with Russia, plans of mutual cooperation, in order to aggrandize both powers. The situation of maritime Europe had afforded to the Austrian Netherlands mercantile benefit, which inspired Joseph with the hopes of acquiring naval and commercial importance. The war

i The celebrated Mirabeau makes the following observations upon these changes:—The internal revolutions which the emperor has effected in his dominions have been greatly applauded; but what a number of objections might be brought against these eulogiums; at least, the panegyrists of Joseph the second ought to tell us what justice they find in driving a citizen from the profession which he has embraced, under the sanction of the laws. I will tell them plainly, that there is as much injustice in expelling a friar, or a nun, from their retreat, as in turning a private individual out of his house. Despise the friars as much as you will, but do not persecute them; above all, do not rob them; for we ought not either to persecute or rob any man, from the avowed atheist down to the most credulous capuchin.

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His schemes of naval and commercial aggrandizement.

that pervaded western Europe had transferred from Holland to Austrian Flanders and Brabant that immense trade, which, through the canals and great German rivers, England carried on with the eastern and northern countries of the continent. The benefits which the Netherlands derived from this transit of so great a commerce, were still farther increased, by the peculiar circumstances of the naval war in which Britain was involved: attacked at once in every part of the world, England was frequently under the necessity of abandoning the protection of her European commerce, that her foreign fleets might be sufficiently powerful to cover her very numerous distant possessions; and British merchants were obliged to use foreign vessels for the conveyance of their goods. From the operation of these causes, Ostend became a general mart of all the neutral as well as belligerent states; and such an influx of trade was carried into that city and port, that even early in the war it reached a degree of opulence and commercial importance, which it never before enjoyed, or was expected to attain. The spirit of mercantile adventure was rapidly diffused through the Austrian low countries; the desire and hope of acquiring immense riches universally operated: Brussels itself notwithstanding the habitual ease and love of pleasure incident to its situation, and the long residence of a court, could not escape the infection; and many of its inhabitants, who had never before engaged in commerce of any kind, now laid out all their ready money in building ships. The citizens of Antwerp regretted the loss of their former trade, riches, and splendor; and conceived hopes of the possible recovery of those valuable advantages. Indeed, the spirit now excited was so prevalent, that the states of the Netherlands presented a memorial to the emperor, requesting that he would take measures for the reestablishment of that port. Meanwhile the growing opulence of Ostend was immense; the limits of the city became too narrow for its inhabitants, and the buildings were not sufficient to cover the immense quantities of merchandise of which it was become the temporary depository: traders and speculators continually arrived to participate such benefit, and rapidly rising population was in proportion to the sudden

flow of riches. Elated with unexpected prosperity, the inhabitants little regarded the circumstance in which it originated, and forgot that, as the cause was transitory, the effect was not likely to be permanent. Such was the state of affairs and sentiments in the Netherlands when the emperor arrived in June 1781 at Ostend: struck with the flourishing condition in which he found this port, impressed with the exulting hopes of the inhabitants, and devoid of that comprehensive sagacity which could distinguish between special and general causes, with the precipitancy of superficial reasoners, he concluded that the prosperity which was then prevalent must always last. In his tour through the Netherlands he bestowed the greatest attention upon merchants, and every object connected with merchandise. Arrived at Antwerp he in his conduct exhibited views of interfering in the navigation of the Scheldt. He went down that river in a boat, as far as to the first of those Dutch forts, which had been erected to guard the passage, and to secure to the states the exclusive command of the river; he had the depth of the channel ascertained in several places, and he strictly examined all the obstructions of art and nature which tended to impede its navigation. Joseph had also farther objects in view, which he thought the situation of Holland, weakened by her impolitic war with her natural ally, would enable him to accomplish.

At the conclusion of the succession war, as many readers must know, the principal fortresses of the Austrian Netherlands were deposited in the hands of the Dutch, for the mutual benefit and security of the court of Vienna and themselves; and while they formed a powerful barrier to cover the territories of the states, they were to be garrisoned and defended by them, and thus serve to obviate the danger apprehended from the power and ambition of France. During the weakness of Austria in the beginning of Maria Teresa's reign, she derived considerable advantages from this treaty; but now that he was become so powerful, the emperor thought himself fully competent to protect and defend his own dominions, and, being master of great armies, he conceived that he did not want fortresses to impede the progress of an enemy. Thinking it derogatory

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to his own honour, as well as to the dignity and power of the empire, that a great number of his principal cities and fortresses should be garrisoned, and at his own expense, he proposed to resume the barrier. To justify the intended measure, he stated that, in the last war between Austria and France, the Dutch had shown themselves incapable of maintaining the fortresses; that, besides, the state of affairs was now so entirely altered, that none of the causes or motives which originally operated to the establishment of the barrier, any longer existed. France, instead of being the common enemy, as then, was now the common friend of both parties; her ambition was no longer dangerous, and if it were, was directed to other objects; the emperor and she were mutually bound in the strictest and dearest ties of friendship and blood. On the side of Holland, it was alleged that Austria was indebted to Britain and the states general for the possession of the Low Countries; and that, as these were the great leaders in the succession war, they compelled France and Spain to cede the Netherlands to Austria. The settlement of the barrier was the only compensation to Holland for all these services, and her immense expenses of blood and treasure, to place the grandfather of the presen emperor on the throne of Spain. Besides, being a direct breach of treaty and violation of faith, the proposed measure would be a shameful dereliction of every sense of past service and obligation; and the season chosen for its accomplishment, under the present embarrassed and depressed state of the republic, would render it still more disgraceful. These arguments, however strong, were of little avail against the power of Joseph; and the Dutch were compelled to yield. The emperor dismantled the fortresses; and thus Holland, through her folly in going to war with England, was stripped of her barrier, for which she had often and vigorously fought. Her most valuable resources being exhausted by war, that unhappy country had the additional calamity of being torn asunder by factions; peace had neither restored vigour and unanimity at home, nor reputation and importance abroad: on the contrary, their civil dissensions were every day increasing in magnitude and virulence. The faction hostile to the stadtholder, and

Dismantles the fortresses of the Netherlands.

connected with France, was now become so strong, that no sufficient counterpoise remained in the state, to restrain the excess and violence incident to the predominance of political parties. The emperor made various claims upon the Dutch frontiers, and did not want pretexts that gave a plausible colouring to meditated injustice. But of all his claims, the most distressing to Holland were the claims upon the city and country of Maestricht, the entire and free navigation of the Scheldt from Antwerp to the sea, and a free and uninterrupted commerce to the factories of Holland in both the East and West Indies. The Dutch alleged, that the emperor claimed all the benefits which were derived from their colonies in the New World, and their conquests and settlements in the East, being the fruits of much hard adventure, great risk, and advance of treasure, of numberless treaties and negotiations, and of many severe wars through the course of near two centuries. The rights of the republic, and particularly her exclusive sovereignty of the Scheldt, had been confirmed, and guaranteed to her by all the treaties which secure the political existence of Europe. The claim upon Maestricht was founded upon obsolete pretences; important as the place was, however, it was only a matter of secondary consideration, and altogether subordinate to the Scheldt. The assertion of the emperor was founded on what he called the natural rights of countries to the navigation and benefit of a river which ran through his territories; whereas the possession of Holland rested on positive and specific compact. A recurrence to the original rights of man, the Dutch justly contended, would destroy those social agreements between individuals and political conventions, which constitute and secure all private and public property. Such a principle, practically admitted, would unloose every bond that unites mankind, throw them into a state of nature, and render the world a chaos of confusion and disorder. However just these arguments were, the emperor paid no regard to reasoning so opposite to his ambitious views. He saw in several concessions the fears of the Dutch, and trusted that their dread of his power would make them desist from the maintenance of their own rights. The moral principle, indeed, of his conduct was very simple:

He proposes to open the Scheldt.

Arguments on both sides.

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1784. Joseph's allegations entirely contrary to justice.

the Dutch are weak, I am strong; I intend to rob them of their property, and they will be afraid to resist. In this belief, he tried the experiment, by equipping two vessels, of which one was to proceed down the Scheldt from Antwerp to the sea, and the other up the river from the sea, on its course from Ostend to that city. The captain of the former of these was furnished with written orders from the emperor, commanding him to proceed in the brig Louis, from Antwerp along the Scheldt into the sea, and expressly forbidding him and his crew to submit to any detention, or to any examination whatever from ships belonging to the republic, which he might meet in the river, or in any manner acknowledge their authority. The imperial ship passed the Lilu and some other forts without examination, but falling in with a Dutch cutter that sent a boat with an officer to the vessel from Antwerp, the imperial captain told the Dutchman, THAT HE WAS ON HIS PASSAGE TO THE SEA; and that his instructions forbid his holding any parley whatever with the officers or ships of the United Provinces. The cutter now coming up to the brig, the imperialist quoted the instructions of his master, and refused to give any further satisfaction, persevering to sail towards the sea. The commander of the cutter entreated, threatened, and employed every means to induce the other to desist from conduct which would necessarily bring the affair to a crisis; but finding his efforts unavailing, he determined to prevent such an unjust and insolent usurpation. He fired first powder without ball, but at length poured a broadside, and threatened with the next discharge to sink his opponent if he continued refractory: the imperialist, seeing it was vain to contend, relinquished his object. The ship from Ostend was no less disappointed in the expectations of getting undisputed up the river. The emperor pretended to consider this spirited defence of their own right, as an aggression on the part of the Dutch. The imperial ambassador was recalled from the Hague, and an army of sixty thousand men was under orders and in preparation for marching from the Austrian hereditary dominions to the Netherlands. The troops which were already there, amounted to about sixteen thousand men; great trains of artillery, and all the other

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apparatus of war were in motion. Exhausted as they were by the war with England, the Dutch made very vigorous preparations; they employed agents to hire troops from Germany; and at home they exerted themselves in recruiting the troops, strengthening the frontiers, and putting the posts and garrisons in the best posture of defence. They prepared for the last refuge which the nature of their country peculiarly afforded, and resolved to open the dykes and lay the Flat Countries under water. While they were thus making provisions for hostility, they endeavoured to appease Joseph by reasonable and equitable expostulation; though they were very far from being disposed, they said, to go to war with the emperor, they were bound by all the laws of nature, of nations, of justice, and of reason, not to permit a violation of their dearest and most incontrovertible rights.

The Dutch prepare to defend their rights.

Russia was at this time closely connected with the emperor, and though she had lately sought the alliance of Holland, and made the republic the tool of her ambition in the armed neutrality, she now warmly and openly seconded the pretensions of Joseph. Catharine, in a letter to the king of Prussia, roundly asserted that the Dutch were in the wrong, and the emperor equally just, moderate, and disinterested. The amount of her reasoning was, that the law of nature gave the Austrian Netherlands the exclusive right of the navigation of the Scheldt, and that the Dutch, in quoting specific treaties to support their claims, manifested an avidity which was notorious and blamable in every respect. Nothing well founded (she said, in the conclusion of her letter) can be alleged in favour of Holland; therefore she merits no assistance from any foreign power. The consequences which these republicans are drawing upon themselves by their obstinacy, must be submitted to the moderation of the emperor alone: I am firmly resolved to assist his pretensions with all my land and sea forces, and with as much efficacy as if the welfare of my own empire was in agitation. I hope that this declaration of my sentiments will meet with the success which our reciprocal friendship deserves, and which has never been interrupted.[k] These maxims of

Russia supports the pretensions of the emperor.

k See translation of this letter in the State Papers, 1784, page 352.

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imperial ethics were not more contrary to the moral judgment of impartial individuals, clearly apprehending and fairly estimating right and wrong, than the imperial politics of both the sovereigns were to the obvious interests of neighbouring potentates. The king of Prussia, it was foreseen, would not be an idle spectator of such an accession accruing to his rival. France, for her own security, would protect Holland against so formidable a neighbour, and was not without farther inducements to oppose the emperor, even should actual hostilities be the consequence. To the arms of France the rich provinces of the Low Countries were most likely to have recourse, especially now that the fortresses on the barrier were demolished. Notwithstanding the affinity between the royal families of Vienna and Versailles, his most christian majesty made very pressing remonstrances to the emperor; he justified the conduct of the Dutch, and urged his imperial majesty not to persevere in violating these important rights, which were so solemnly secured; he hoped the emperor would desist from efforts, which would cause so general an alarm among his neighbours; and other powers would think themselves obliged to take such precautions and measures as circumstances and events might require. The king himself must, in that case, be under the necessity of assembling troops on his frontiers, and could not, by any means, be indifferent to the fate of the United Provinces, nor see them attacked by open force in their rights and possessions. The remonstrances of France made no impression upon the emperor; he considered the free navigation of the Scheldt as an incontrovertible right, which was subject to no discussion or question. The Netherlands was fast filling with his troops, and winter only retarded hostile operations.

Prussia and France unfriendly to the emperor's demands.

Britain is disposed to protect the rights of Holland.

GREAT BRITAIN observed all those proceedings with a watchful eye, but did not commit herself by any hasty declaration. The views of the British cabinet were great and extensive; it was planned, to secure Holland from the aggressions of her neighbours, and to detach her from a connexion with France. This project, however, was then only in contemplation, being by no means fit for execution.

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1784. Britain recovers from the distresses of the war.

BRITAIN was now recovering fast from the distresses of the war; trade was reviving; by the prevention of fraud the revenue was becoming much more productive; and industry and enterprise were again roused by the rekindled hopes of success. So lately drooping, this country now raised her head; a benignant season added to the improvements of her condition, and in present comfort the people soon forgot recent distress: prospects of returning prosperity opened, and the people were satisfied with government, whose measures they expected would greatly increase and accelerate private and public prosperity. The great demands of our distant possessions, precluded during the war from regular and sufficient supply, afforded a very large vent for the productions and acquisitions of British industry and skill. The Americans too, communication being again opened, eagerly flocked in quest of British wares, the superior excellence of which, compulsory disuse had only imprinted the more deeply on their minds. The restored islands of the West Indies furnished a considerable market for our commodities; the want of which, while under the dominion of our enemies, they had so sensibly felt. The settlements also which remained in our possession, had been but sparingly provided while hostile fleets hovered on their coasts, and not yet having fully recovered from the scourge of the hurricanes, called for a great portion of our merchandise. Of our foreign settlements, the chief vent after the peace was the East, in which the supply had not been by any means so liberal as the wants of British India required; but during this, and some years after the war, the outward trade of the company very far exceeded the usual periods of peace.[1] Our commerce with our late maritime enemies of Europe revived, although it was easily seen

1 This great and general benefit to skilful and judicious adventurers, as well as to the public, was attended with partial evil in the ruin of those traders, who did not distinguish the real nature of the case, and who confounded temporary with general causes. Finding that very large profits had been made by a variety of articles during the first voyages after the war, not a few of the company's officers in the shipping service, and their connexion at home, carried out investments of the same kind, until they glutted the market and lost their former profits, and from their misjudging eagerness of avarice completely defeated their own purposes and became bankrupts; but skilful and able traders continued to realise fortunes.

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that systems might be formed, respecting every branch of trade, which would render them much more productive.

1784 Miscellaneous occurrences. Death of Dr Johnson, and a short view of literature and science at his decease.

THIS year England lost one of the brightest ornaments that had graced her literary annals during a century, with which he was almost coeval. In December 1784, died Dr. Samuel Johnson, in the 76th year of his age, after a long and tormenting illness, which he bore with fortitude and resignation, worthy of his other virtues. Literary history affords few instances of such a combination of intellectual and moral qualities as constituted the character, and prompted and guided the efforts, of Samuel Johnson. An understanding perspicacious, powerful, and comprehensive; an imagination vigorous, fertile, and brilliant; and a memory retentive, accurate, and stored with valuable knowledge, were uniformly directed to render mankind wise, virtuous and religious. The most successful and beneficial exertions of this illustrious sage were exhibited in philology, criticism, biography and ethics. On subjects of language, Johnson displayed science as well as knowledge; he not only collected usages, but investigated principles; applying and modifying general analogies, according to the circumstances of the particular cases, he extremely enriched the English tongue, and improved it in precision and force. The stile which his precept and example formed, bore the stamp of his mind and habits, being less distinguished for elegance and delicacy, than for perspicuity and strength: his expression, however, was perhaps not the most useful as a general model, because its excellence depended on its conformity to his vigorous sentiments and thought. Since the time of Aristotle few have equalled Johnson as a critic, either in principles of estimation, or in actually appreciating defect and excellence. Surveying models rather than considering ends, many critics of distinguished acuteness and knowledge of literature conceived that meritorious execution consists in resemblance to certain celebrated performances; but these, justly and highly applauded, do not include every possible means of deserving applause. Disregarding mere usage and authority, Johnson followed nature and reason: in rating the value of a Shakespeare, he did not esteem the mode of Grecian arrangement the cri-

terion of judgment, but the exhibited operation of passion, sentiment, and character, and its conformity to real life. He estimated works of imitation by their likeness to originals, combined with the importance of object and difficulty of delineation. As a biographer, Dr. Johnson is unequalled; he indeed possessed the highest requisites for that important species of writing: he thoroughly knew the constitution and movements of the human understanding and will; was intimately conversant with the kind of circumstances in which his subjects acted; and the usual and probable operation of such causes: he completely knew their individual history, comprehended their character, and had the power of clearly conveying to others, and forcibly impressing, his thoughts, opinions, and conceptions. Though the most valuable ethics are diffused through all his works, yet two of his productions are more peculiarly appropriated to those subjects. His Rambler showed more of man in his general nature, as he himself says of Dryden; his Idler, as he says of Pope, more of man in his local manners. His Rambler was the work of a profound, comprehensive philosopher; his Idler of genius and learning experienced in life: the former describes men as they always are, the latter as they then were in England. It may be easily and obviously objected to the political writings of Johnson, that they were by no means equal in either knowledge or wisdom to his other productions. A whig zealot might exclaim against the high church bigotry, theological intolerance, and arbitrary politics of this great man, as a tory zealot might depreciate Milton, because a puritan and republican; but the impartial observer, making allowance for human infirmities, will see prejudices and unfounded opinions totally outweighed by transcendent excellencies. The historian of the present reign, if he narrate the truth, after balancing the good and the bad, must admit that few either lived or died in it of such great and beneficially directed wisdom as Samuel Johnson. Besides the vast accession of knowledge and instruction accruing to mankind from the individual efforts of this extraordinary man, his conversation and writings stimulated and formed many others to meritorious compositions. The disciples of the Johnsonian school, what-

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ever might be their several diversities of ability and character, have written to promote religion, order, and virtue. Having made such important additions to the general mass of information and instruction, he taught by precept and example the most efficacious processes of reasoning, and the surest test of truth; he exhibited the close connexion between clearness of conception and precision of expression, and afforded materials and principles of thought and judgment, with directions and examples for estimating fairly, and conveying ideas and sentiments with clearness, force and effect. Scholars of moderate talents, who neither evince depth of reflection, vigour of invention, or brilliancy of fancy, are now accurate composers, and competent estimators of literary merit. Through Johnson, respectable mediocrity of ability and learning has beem prompted and enabled to direct its patient and industrious efforts to the useful purposes, not only of just criticism, but loyal and patriotic, virtuous and religious, inculcation. Perhaps, however, the literary efforts of Dr. Johnson may have been more beneficial to other writers, than to his own particular associates; from the latter, they come to the world tinctured with his particular prejudices; among the former, they have often diffused unalloyed portions of his general wisdom and virtue.

As the death of Dr. Johnson is an epoch in the literary history of the times, it may not here be unseasonable to give a short sketch of literary efforts at this period. The American war had produced a vast multiplicity of political pamphlets, of which, though the greater number were of only a temporary interest, yet some, from the ability of the writers, the importance of the principles, and the receptions of the doctrines, were of much more permanent consequence. Two men of considerable talents and high reputation engaging in this controversy, broached opinions of a very unconstitutional tendency: these were, doctors Richard Price and Joseph Priestley, gentlemen who from nature and study possessed the means of promoting, to a great extent, the benefit of society, were disposed to use their talents for those meritorious purposes, and had actually employed them with very great success, in certain paths, to the good of man-

kind; yet were now active in exerting them in pursuit of objects, or at least in inculcating doctrines of a very injurious tendency to the existing establishments. With genius competent to any subject of literary or scientific investigation, and deeply skilled in calculation, Price had peculiarly distinguished himself by inquiries into population, and by financial research. Priestley, by his discoveries in chemistry, electricity, pneumatics, and subjects relative to these, had made valuable additions to physical knowledge and science, both for theoretical contemplation and practical use. These two philosophers were dissenters, and dissenters of a class which has generally carried dissent beyond theological opinions, and has incorporated politics. Men, at once able and ambitious, if they happen to find themselves in a minority, very naturally seek to render that minority a majority. In situations of peace by making converts, as in situations of war by making conquests, aspiring leaders seek power. From calculations and from chemical researches, doctors Price and Priestley betook themselves to politics, and to theological controversy, which was intended to minister to politics; adopted the visionary theories which the profound wisdom of Locke had not prevented from pervading his opinions in politics, with many of the hypothetical comments which had joined them in the course of the century: these they inculcated as the just conclusions of political wisdom, and the proper rules for political conduct. Besides the treatises already mentioned, they published various works, which refined on Locke's fiction of a social compact, and represented every system of government as necessarily bad, that had not originated in a convention of men assembled for the purpose of forming a constitution; consequently, as no existing government had been so constituted, concluding that every established polity was necessarily unjust. So far as these speculations were merely exercises of metaphysical ingenuity, they might be accounted innocent pastimes; but whether intended or not to be harmless, they certainly were not designed to be inefficient; they were most industriously circulated by the secondary instruments, which, in the literary as well as the political world, are in such numbers ready to repeat even the errors of conceived genius; and by the

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authors themselves, among those who were most disposed to take their assertions as arguments. Price, though constant in his principle, was more desultory and occasional in his operations: eminent in certain departments of learning, Priestley had attempted to grasp at every subject of human knowledge, and, in the midst of his endeavours at universality, directed his principal efforts towards one great object, the subversion of the ecclesiastical establishment. It is now obvious, by considering the whole series of his conduct, that he had early formed the design of overturning our hierarchy, which he himself afterwards acknowledged with triumphant exultation for the imagined success. Priestley appeared to have proceeded on the following principle: "I, and a minority of this nation, do not approve of any establishment, especially of the church of England, her constitution and doctrines, supported by the majority of the nation; as we, a *smaller number*, with *not more* than our own proportion of ability and property, cannot agree with the GREATER NUMBER, we must must make THEM agree with our creed."[m] Seeking the downfal of the church, Dr. Priestley formed a plan, consisting of two parts; the first to attack the articles of her faith, the next the muniments of her establishment. The former part of his scheme, which was indeed preparatory to the latter, at present chiefly engaged his attention. For several years he had been strenuously labouring to overturn the Christian doctrine of the Trinity; this being an article of faith, which the greater number of Christians, and especially those of the church of England, deem essential to the gospel, and consequently to every establishment by which the gospel is cherished. An attack upon so fundamental a part of our religion, was by no means an impolitical movement; nor was it carried on without great dexterity. In adducing the common arguments of often exploded sophistry, his genius gave to triteness a colour of origin-

m It must be admitted by any liberal friend of the church, on the one hand, that if Dr. Priestley conscientiously intended the temporal and eternal happiness of his countrymen, and not his own aggrandizement, he was morally justifiable; but a liberal dissenter, on the other hand, must admit, that all those whose opinion was different, whether moralists or statesmen, were equally justifiable in impugning his arguments and repelling his attacks.

ality, and to superficial declamation an appearance of profound reasoning, which, on many even of those not borne down by the authority of his name, made a very strong impression. While the generalissimo of heresy was himself thus employed, he had distributed his officers and troops with great skill in different posts and positions, according to his knowledge of their ability, skill, and zeal for the cause. Our ecclesiastical establishment, however, did not want a defender, who was at once ardent, able, and well provided with the means of guarding the church against the assailant. Dr. Samuel Horsley brought an acute and powerful mind, disciplined and formed by science, and stored with general and theological learning, to support the faith which he had embraced, and the venerable body of which he was a member. The Unitarian controversy, which for several years maintained by misconstruing ingenuity, and reassertion of often confuted arguments; by obstinate iteration of sophistry on the one hand, and on the other, by plain interpretation, deductive reasoning, fair inference, and firm adherence to positions so founded; now occupied a great share of lettered efforts and attention[n]. Controversies arising from some parts of Gibbon's history were also very prevalent: the author, however, engaged, little in the disputes; he was persevering in his able, learned, and approved work, in which, though the pious must disrelish the antichristian tendency of several parts, and the acute may discover assertion without proof adduced to support favourite notions, yet every reader of judgment, comprehension, and philosophical and political knowledge, must allow that it is an illustrious monument of industry and genius, which lightens readers through the darkness of the middle ages, and exhibits man in various stages of declining society, until he terminated in barbarism, and, regenerating, began to return towards civilization. Another history had at this time just appeared, that embraced periods much better known to every classical reader; but though it recited transactions with which every literary man was well acquainted, it presented new and profound views, unfolded causes, and marked operations

n The Reviews of these years had more than one half of their writings occupied either with this controversy, or the politics of the day.

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and effects, that even intelligent and learned readers had not before discovered. The philosophical pen of Fergusson rendered the affairs of the greatest people of antiquity the groundwork of the deepest and most expanded moral and political science; to teach mankind that wisdom, courage, enterprise and skill, uniformly and constantly exerted in the various departments of a political system, elevate a a nation as they exalt an individual, and that folly and vice overturn the fabric which virtue and wisdom had raised. Works of an inferior species to history, though pursuing the same object, travels and voyages, much increased our knowledge of the interior and civil condition of various countries, with which our acquaintance before had been chiefly confined to geographical outlines and political relations. The travels of Messrs. Moore, Wraxal, Coxe, and others, into various parts of Europe, not only afforded amusement and entertainment, but knowledge of mankind. The voyages of the renowned circumnavigator, captain Cook, which displayed human nature in a light showing at once its varieties and uniformity, were a pleasing aud interesting accession of literary novelty.

Improvement of the present age in natural philosophy and chemistry.

PHYSICAL knowledge and science were making rapid advances, while, from former discoveries of philosophy, invention and experience were fast educing arts which administered to the purposes of life. Doctors Black and Watson were persevering in their chemical pursuits, and powerfully contributing to the elucidation of subjects, curious to speculative, and useful to practical men; with which, through the abilities and labours of such men, followed by many others of patient research and useful industry, who were employed in experimental detail, the public is now become so conversant.

Invention of air balloons.

THE immense improvements of the present age, in the general analysis of material substances, and particularly in the application of chemistry to the qualities of air, produced about this time an invention that astonished mankind, by an artificial phenomenon, which appeared to realize the fable of Dædalus, and to find a passage for man through the air. Eminent philosophers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the qualities of air had inferred the practicability of such an undertaking, but did not explore

the means. The discovery was reserved for the ingenuity of two French manufacturers of paper at Annouay in Dauphiny, Messrs. Montgolfier. These gentlemen, observing the ascent of vapour or smoke in the atmosphere, concluded that the general principle was the ascent of air rarified by absorption, and that it must ascend until it arrive at air of such a tenuity as to prove an exact equilibrium. On this reasoning they constructed a globular machine of paper and fine silk, covered with elastic gum; in short, of the very lightest terrene materials. This ball, being about thirty feet in circumference, was raised to a considerable height, merely by applying some lighted combustibles to an aperture at its lower extremity. If so small a power of rarified air could raise such a weight, a proportionate increase must raise a proportionably greater weight; hence it was found, by extending the experiment, that a ball of linen of 23,000 cubic feet[o] in dimension, being moved by combustibles, would lift about five hundred weight. Montgolfier soon after presented the experiment at Paris; a sheep, a cock, and a duck, were placed in a gallery next the balloon, and returned without hurt. On the 23d of November 1783, two human beings adventured to essay an element hitherto unexplored by man. The marquis de Landes and Monsieur Drosier undertook this extraordinary navigation: at 54 minutes past one o'clock, the machine ascended into the air before an immense number of astonished spectators. When it had reached 250 feet, the intrepid travellers waving their hats saluted the wondering crowd: the aerial navigators were soon beyond the reach of discernment from the earth, but the ball itself was seen towering towards the confines of ether. The travellers having found their experiment successful, agreed to descend by gradually lessening the application of air, and arrived safely in an open field at some distance from the city.[p] The event of this experiment with rarified air, encouraged farther trials; Monsieur

o About twenty-eight and a half, to a figure exactly cubical.

p In an epilogue to a play exhibited at Westminster soon after this experiment, there was a verse containing the following pun on this *Gallic* invention:

"Quis propria Gallo plus levitate valet?"
"Who can surpass a Frenchman in appropriate levity?"

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Charles, the professor of natural philosophy at Paris, suggested the improvement of inflammable air, instead of rarified. In 1784 the experiment was tried in England by Mr. Lunardi, an Italian gentleman. On the 15th of September, this gentleman, about five minutes after two o'clock, ascended from the artillery ground, before 150,000 people, who were collected in the places immediately adjacent: many of the other inhabitants of London and the environs were gazing from the house tops; business of every kind appeared to be suspended, and every ray of thought converged into one focus; in short, Lunardi and the balloon occupied general conversation. The sky fortunately was without a cloud, so that his ascent above London was clearly perceived from a distance of many miles around. The balloon took a northerly direction: at half past three, Lunardi arrived at South Mimms, where he descended on a common; but again raising himself, he proceeded in the same direction, and afterwards descended at Ware.[q] Various balloons were afterwards launched, in Britain and other parts of the world, and many treatises were published, endeavouring to demonstrate the important advantages which might arise from this invention, but none of them have been hitherto realized.

Ascent of Lunardi from the artillery ground.

Astonishment of the metropolis at this phenomenon.

q The following passage is quoted from Lunardi's written account of his own voyage, observations, and feelings, when from the aerial heights he looked down upon the British metropolis:—"When the thermometer was at fifty, the effect of the atmosphere, and the combination of circumstances around, produced a calm delight which is inexpressible, and which no situation on earth could give; the stillness, extent, and magnificence of the scene rendered it highly awful; my horizon seemed a perfect circle; the terminating line several hundred miles in circumference. This I conjectured from the view of London, the extreme points of which formed an angle of only a few degrees; it was so reduced on the great scale before me, that I can find no simile to convey an idea of it. I could distinguish St. Pauls and other churches from the houses; I saw the streets as lines, all animated with beings whom I knew to be men and women, but which I should otherwise had a difficulty in describing; it was an enormous beehive, but the industry of it was suspended. Indeed the whole scene before me filled my mind with a sublime pleasure of which I never had a conception; I had soared from the apprehensions and anxieties of the world, and felt as if I had left behind all the cares and passions that molest mankind." Of the second descent, he gives the following account:—"At twenty minutes past four, I descended in a spacious meadow in the parish of Stondon, near Ware in Hertfordshire; some labourers were at work in it, I requested their assistance; they exclaimed they would have nothing to do with one who came in the devil's house! and no intreaties could prevail on them to approach me. I at last owed my deliverance to the spirit and generosity of a female; a young woman took hold of a cord which I had thrown out, and calling to the men, they yielded that assistance to her request, which they had refused to mine. A crowd of people from the neighbourhood assembled, who very willingly assisted me to disembark.

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Meeting of parliament.—Consideration of the Westminster scrutiny.—Debts of the nabob of Arcot.—Mr. Burke's speech on the subject.—Mr. Pitt's plan of parliamentary reform—introduced into parliament—negatived by a great majority.—State of Ireland.—Propositions of Mr. Pitt to settle trade on the basis of mutual reciprocity.—Resolutions for that purpose.—Additional propositions.—Petitions against them.—After considerable modification they are passed into a law.—Sent over to the Irish parliament.—Messrs. Flood and Grattan oppose the propositions.—Their eloquence stirs up their countrymen to rage or indignation.—They are abandoned by the British government.—Their real merit.—Mr. Pitt's statements of finance, and intimation of a plan for paying the national debt.—The session rises.—Affairs of Europe.—Designs of the emperor upon Bavaria—supported by Russia—opposed by Prussia and Hanover.—France, though in alliance with Austria, adverse to Joseph's ambition.—The emperor relinquishes his designs upon Bavaria.—Abandons the navigation of the Scheldt, and concludes peace with Holland.—Treaty between France and Holland.—Internal state of France.—Projects for diminishing her enormous debts.—Theories of the philosophical economists.—Influence the practice of politicians and statesmen.—Multiplicity of ingenious writers.—Votaries of innovation.—Doctrines of Voltaire and Rousseau regarded with enthusiastic admiration.—Prevalence of infidelity.—Great and increasing prosperity of Britain.—Confidence of the moneyed interests in the talents and integrity of Mr. Pitt.—Supporters of the minister.—Butts of opposition, wit, and satire.—The Rolliad and birth-day odes.—Question of literary property.—Return of Mr. Hastings.—A great subject of temporary literature.

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1785. Meeting of parliament.

PARLIAMENT met on the 26th of January 1785, and the chief object recommended by his majesty to the attention of the legislature, was the adjustment of such points in the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland, as had not before been arranged. The success attending measures which were embraced in the last session for the suppression of smuggling, would encourage them to persevere in their application to those important concerns; they would also consider the reports suggested by the commissioners of public accounts, and make such regulations as might appear necessary in the different offices of the kingdom. Notwithstanding the dissensions on the continent, his majesty continued to receive assurances from foreign powers of their amicable disposition towards this country.

THE earl of Surrey opposed the address, or rather objected to it on account of what he conceived to be wrongly omitted; especially because no mention had been made of the reduction of the army. Lord North, conceiving parliamentary reform to be intended by one recommendatory expression, declared his sentiments very strongly against any alteration of the constitution; and Mr. Burke blamed the total silence relative to the affairs of India. Mr. Pitt replied to the objections; the observations on the reduction of the army were premature, until the supplies of the year should be before the house: parliamentary reform was a subject of the highest importance, but at this early period of the session it was impossible to state his plans specifically: all his ideas were not yet thoroughly matured; the subject comprehended a great variety of considerations, and related to essentials and vitals of the constitution; it therefore required considerate and delicate attention; and though it was a path which he was determined to tread, he knew with what tenderness and circumspection it became him to proceed. There was not a general debate, and the address was carried without a division.

Consideration of the Westminster scrutiny.

THE scrutiny of the Westminster election was again brought before the house in the month of February. Mr. Fox had contended, that the election ought to be tried by Mr. Grenville's act, and had imputed the perseverance in

the scrutiny to the persecuting spirit of the minister. Mr. Pitt argued, that Mr. Grenville's act was for trying elections virtually made, but that there being no return from Westminster, the law in question was not applicable: a scrutiny had been demanded by one of the candidates, the returning officer had complied, as official duty required; far from having any personal motives to promote a scrutiny, the very reverse was the case; it would have been more convenient and easy for ministers to have suffered Mr. Fox to take his seat without question, but instead of attending to their own accommodation, they had consulted the rights of the electors, and the purposes of substantial justice. The house continued in the same opinion as to the legality of the scrutiny; but finding in its progress that, though there were objectionable votes on both sides, a majority, nearly the same in proportion as at the close of the poll, remained in favour of Mr. Fox, they judged it expedient and equitable to direct the high bailiff to make a return; and the following day that officer returned lord Hood and Mr. Fox.

Debts of the nabob of Arcot.

On the eighteenth of February the nabob of Arcot's debts to Europeans were the subject of parliamentary discussion. In Mr. Fox's India bill the new commissioners had been instructed to examine into the origin and justice of the claims; by Mr. Pitt's law the examination was appointed, but referred to the court of directors, who were to enjoin their presidencies and servants to inquire into the case, and in concert establish a fund from the nabob's revenue, for the discharge of the debts which should be found just, that they might be liquidated according to the respective rights of priority of the several creditors, and consistently with the rights of the company, and the honour and dignity of the nabob. Conformably to this clause, the directors had prepared orders; but after inspection, the board of control rejected them, and gave new instructions, which admitted the greater part of the debts to be just, assigned a fund from the revenues of the Carnatic for their discharge, and established the priority of payment among the several classes of creditors: these directions had been publicly read at a meeting of such creditors as were in England. Motions

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were made in both houses, that copies of the letters or injunctions issued by the court of directors might be produced; the object of this requisition was to prove, that the board of control, in originating the contrary order, had departed from the express purpose of their institution, and had violated the act of parliament. Mr. Fox having opened this subject in the house of commons, and assuming the position that was to be proved, expatiated with copious eloquence on the arbitrary power which was usurped by the board of control, and the mischievous consequences that the present act must produce to the interests of the Carnatic, and of the India company. Mr. Dundas argued from the act of parliament, that the power exercised was not an usurpation, since, by the strict letter of the statute, the board was enabled to originate orders in cases of urgent necessity, and to direct their transmission to India. In the present exercise of that power, the board of control had acted upon the most complete information that could be received, and had directed the arrangement in question, on finding it the most fair and just to all the parties concerned. It was expedient not to keep the nabob's debts longer afloat; the final conclusion of the business would tend to promote tranquillity and harmony, and the debtor had concurred with the creditors in establishing the validity of the claims. After these general observations, he, by a particular detail of their respective circumstances, undertook to justify the several debts which were admitted by the board.

Mr. Burke's speech on the subject.

On this subject Mr. Burke made a very long oration, which displayed a most extensive knowledge of the history and state of India; but it was much more remarkable for narratives, imagery, and philosophy, to inform, delight, and instruct a reader in his closet, than for appropriate arguments to the point at issue, to convince a hearer in the senate, and induce him to vote as the speaker desired. The part of his reasoning that appeared specifically applicable to the subject before the house was adduced, to demonstrate that the alleged debts arose from a collusion between the nabob and certain servants of the company, who had been guilty of the most heinous fraud, oppression, and cruelty: forcibly animated and highly coloured was

the picture he drew, of tyranny and suffering, guilt and misery, in British India, as the result of the alleged connivance; but since, as a chain of logical deduction, the evidence did not make out the case, the motion was negatived; and in the house of peers a similar proposition was rejected.

On the eighteenth of April, Mr. Pitt again introduced his propositions for a reform in parliament. Desirous, as the minister professed himself, of such a change in the representation as he conceived most consistent with the principles, and conducive to the objects of the constitution, he was aware of the danger of essays of reform, unless very nicely modified and circumscribed. The general characteristics of his plan for that purpose, were caution and specification: nothing vague or indefinite was proposed; no chasm was left which visionary imaginations might fill with their own distempered fancies: *thus far shalt thou go and no farther*, was obviously expressed in the extent and bounds. The leading principle was, that the choice of legislators should follow such circumstances as give an interest in their acts, and therefore ought in a great degree to be attached to property. This principle being established, it was obvious, that as many very considerable towns and bodies either had no vote in electing representatives, or had not the privilege of choosing a number proportioned to their property, it would be necessary to disfranchise certain decayed boroughs. In relations between government and subject it was a manifest rule in jurisprudence on the one hand, that the interest of a part must give way to the interest of the whole; but on the other, that when such a sacrifice is required from a subject, the state should amply compensate individual loss incurred for the public good. Guided by these maxims of ethics, Mr. Pitt proposed to transfer the right of choosing representatives from thirty-six of such boroughs as had already fallen, or were falling into decay, to the counties, and to such chief towns and cities as were at present unrepresented; that a fund should be provided for the purpose of giving to the owners and holders of the boroughs disfranchised, an appreciated compensation; that the acceptance of this recompense should be a voluntary act of the proprietor, and,

Mr. Pitt's plan of parliamentary reform,

is introduced into parliament,

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if not taken at present, should be placed out at compound interest, until it became an irresistible bait to such proprietor; he also projected to extend the right of voting for knights of the shire to copyholders as well as freeholders. The chief arguments in favour of a reform were derived from the alleged partiality of representation; an active reforming, and regulating policy, which kept pace with the alterations in the country, was requisite to preserve the constitution in its full vigour: when any part of our system was decayed, it had ever been the wisdom of the legislature to renovate and restore it by such means as were most likely to answer the end proposed: and hence had arisen the frequent alterations that had taken place with respect to the rule of representation. From a change of circumstances, towns which once ought to have a vote in choosing a senator or senators, now behoved to have none; and towns once without any just claim to the right of such an election, were now aggrieved and injured by the want of that privilege. The principle continued the same in both the former and the latter, but its application should be altered in a difference of case. The opposers of reform, on the other hand, contended, that no necessity had been shown for such a change; that whatever inequalities theory might exhibit in the existing system, the people were all actually represented, as far as was necessary to their rights and happiness; that no man could be deprived of liberty, property, or life, but by his own act, whether he had a vote for a member of parliament or not; that under the present mode of representation, both individual and national prosperity had risen to a very great pitch, and was rapidly rising to a higher; that it was extremely dangerous to alter what experience, the only sure test of political truth, had uniformly shown to be good.[r] The people did not want

r Never, perhaps, were the arguments on this side of the question more clearly exhibited, than those which are compressed into a page of one of the most valuable works that can be recorded in the literary history of the present reign. Paley, in his Principles of moral and political Philosophy, resting the question concerning representation, as well as every political establishment, solely on expediency, says, "We consider it (representation) so far only as a "right at all, as it conduces to public utility; that is, as it contributes to the "establishment of good laws, or as it secures to the people the just administra-"tion of these laws. These effects depend upon the disposition and abilities of "the national counsellors: wherefore, if men the most likely, by their qualifi-"cations, to know and to promote the public interest, be actually returned to

reform; the large towns that were said to be aggrieved by the present state of representation had made no complaint, or sought any redress; those which were called rotten and decayed boroughs were frequently represented by gentlemen who had the greatest stake in the country, and consequently were as much concerned in its welfare as any other representatives. Mr. Pitt's propositions were negatived by a majority of two hundred and forty-eight to one hundred and seventy-four.

and negatived by a great majority.

PARLIAMENT was this year principally occupied by forming arrangements for a commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland.

State of Ireland.

WE have seen that, in the year 1780, the trade of Ireland had been freed from the hurtful restrictions by which it had long been shackled. In 1782, the independence of the Irish parliament had been for ever established. It remained for the legislature of the two countries to arrange a system of commercial intercourse, which might best promote the advantage of the two parties so nearly connected. The freedom of trade had afforded to Ireland the means of improvement; of which the success must depend on the active, well directed, and persevering industry of the inhabitants; as without those exertions, the mere exemption from former restriction could be of little avail: no effectual measures had hitherto been employed for exciting and cherishing so beneficial a spirit: the manufacturers had for some years been much engaged in political speculations, which, by abstracting their atten-

"parliament, it signifies little who return them. *If the properest persons be "elected, what matters it by whom* they are elected? At least no prudent "statesman would subvert long established or even settled rules of represen- "tation, without a prospect of procuring wiser or better representatives. This "then being well observed, let us, before we seek to obtain any thing more, con- "sider duly what we already have. We have a house of commons composed of "five hundred and forty-eight members, in which number are found the most "considerable landholders and merchants of the kingdom, the heads of the "army, the navy, and the laws; the occupiers of great offices in the state, "together with many private individuals, eminent by their knowledge, eloquence, "or activity. Now, if the country be not safe in such hands, in whose may it "confide its interest? If such a number of such men be liable to the influence of "corrupt motives, what assembly of men will be secure from the same danger? "Does any new scheme of representation promise to collect together more wis- "dom or produce firmer integrity? In this view of the subject, and attending not "to ideas of order and proportion (of which many minds are much enamoured), "but to known effects alone, we may discover just excuses for those parts of the "present representation which appears to a hasty observer most exceptionable "and absurd." Paley, vol. ii. p. 219.

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tion from their own business, naturally caused great distress; and that distress, discontent and violence. Various expedients were attempted for their relief. In 1784, Mr. Gardener brought forward a plan for protecting their own manufactures, and enforcing the consumption of them at home, by laying heavier duties on similar manufactures imported from other countries; he had therefore moved to restrict the importation of English drapery, by subjecting it to a duty of 2s. 6d. per yard. It was objected to this motion, that Great Britain would probably retaliate, and that Ireland might endanger the loss of the linen trade, the annual value of which was a million and a half, for the uncertain prospect of increasing the woollen, that did not exceed 50,000l. A proposition of such obvious impolicy was rejected by the great majority of one hundred to thirty-six. The populace having been ardently desirous that the bill should pass, were inflamed with the greatest rage at its rejection, and gave loose to excessive outrage. They entered into compacts not to consume imported goods, and inflicted the most severe punishment on those who either did not subscribe or adhere to such agreements: the riotous outrages of the mob rendered the interference of military force necessary, and though the soldiers behaved with all possible moderation, still in the tumults disagreeable violence took place, and Dublin was a scene of dissention. In such a situation, regard to temporary tranquillity, as well as to general, commercial, and political interest, rendered it necessary to devise some tie, that, by connecting the interests, might combine the inclinations of both countries. Mr. Pitt, seeing so strong special reasons, and urging immediately what the general consideration required to be speedily effected, took measures for a commercial treaty with Ireland. Commissioners appointed on the part of the sister kingdom concerted with the British cabinet a plan for regulating and finally adjusting the commercial intercourse. The result Mr. Orde stated to the Irish parliament on the 11th of February, and moved a corresponding set of resolutions, which passed the house of commons with little alteration. The concurrence of the house of peers being soon after obtained, the resolutions, ten in number, were immediately

Propositions of Mr. Pitt to settle trade on the basis of mutual reciprocity.

transmitted to England, as on their part, the proposed basis for an equitable and final adjustment. Mr. Pitt having received these assurances of the disposition of the body of the Irish parliament to settle their commercial intercourse on the basis of reciprocity, moved a resolution to the following effect: "That it is highly important to "the general interests of the empire that the commercial "intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland should be "finally adjusted, and that Ireland should be permitted to "have a permanent and irrevocable participation of the "commercial advantages of this country, when her parlia- "ment shall permanently and irrevocably secure an aid out "of the surplus of the hereditary revenue of that kingdom, "towards defraying the expense of protecting the general "commerce of the empire in time of peace." After reviewing what had been already granted to Ireland by the British parliament, he generalized his object: which was to settle commercial intercourse on the firm basis of mutual reciprocity. In applying this principle, he exhibited an extensive knowledge of the relative and absolute state of manufactures, and other materials of commerce, in both countries, and proposed a plan, under two general heads: First, Britain was to allow the importation of the produce of our colonies in the West Indies and America into Ireland: secondly, There should be established between the two countries a mutual exchange of their respective productions and manufactures upon equal terms. The first, he allowed, had the appearance of militating against the navigation laws, for which England ever entertained the greatest partiality; but as she already allowed Ireland to trade directly with the colonies, the importation of the produce of those settlements circuitously through Ireland into Britain, could not injure the colonial trade of this country. Such was the general outline of the proposed system on its first appearance. A considerable portion of the session was employed in examining merchants and manufacturers upon the various details which could elucidate the subject; and after fully investigating the evidence of the traders, Mr. Pitt, on the 12th of May, proposed twenty resolutions, containing a full explanation of the terms before proposed, and also new resolutions, which arose

Resolutions for that purpose.

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1785 Additional propositions.

from the increased knowledge that had been acquired. The chief objects of the additional propositions were to provide, First, That whatever navigation laws the British parliament should hereafter find it necessary to enact for the preservation of her marine, the same should be passed by the legislature of Ireland. Secondly, against the importation of any West India merchandises, that were not the produce of our own colonies into Ireland, and from thence into Britain. Thirdly, That Ireland should debar itself from trading to any of the countries beyond the cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan, so long as it should be thought necessary to continue the charter of the English East India company.

THE propositions underwent severe animadversion against the whole system: it was argued, that the manufactures and commerce of Great Britain would be materially injured by the establishment of the proposed regulations; the former, from the comparatively small price of labour in Ireland, which alone, it was contended, would soon enable that kingdom to undersell us at home and abroad; the latter, from the facility with which it was well known the revenue laws in Ireland were evaded. The plan was strongly deprecated by British manufacturers, and many urgent petitions were presented, praying it might not be adopted. The chief objections were made to the fourth proposition, by which it was intended, "That all laws made or to be made in Britain for secur- "ing exclusive privileges to the ships and mariners of "Britain, Ireland, and the British colonies and planta- "tions, and for regulating and restraining the colonial "trade, should be enforced by Ireland, by laws to be "passed by the parliament of that kingdom, for the same "time and in the same manner as in Britain." The adversaries of the system asserted, that this part of the plan was a resumption of the right of legislation for Ireland, which Britain had renounced, and a proffer of commercial advantage to Ireland in exchange for her lately acquired independence; they further contended against the propositions in general, that in whatever proportion the one country should benefit from them, in the very same the other would lose. The supporters of the measure ar-

gued, that it was absolutely necessary, in order to remove the discontents which at present raged in Ireland; and that unless the propositions were passed into a law, all the recent grants would prove useless, as they were evidently inadequate to the expectations of the sister kingdom. The fourth proposition was a clause which the safety of our own navigation laws made it necessary to annex to the benefits allowed to Ireland. It was not the intention of the British parliament to interfere with the independence of Ireland; all that was proposed, was a proffer of advantage from one independent state to another, on a condition subject to which, that other had the alternative of either accepting or rejecting the whole plan. The notion that, in a commercial treaty between two nations, if the one gained, the other must proportionably lose, was totally unfounded: trade between two states might be, and often was, the reciprocal exchange of surplus for supply, as between individuals; and thus both parties might be very great gainers. The relative situation of Britain and Ireland, their respective commodities and habits, were such as to afford a moral certainty of the highest benefits to both countries, from the increased productiveness of labour through the reciprocation of speedy markets. After three months had been chiefly occupied in examining witnesses, and modifying the various provisions, the propositions were passed by a large majority in the house of commons, and afterwards by the lords. On the 28th of July Mr. Pitt proposed a bill founded upon them; this was accompanied by an address to the king, in which both houses concurred, containing a statement of what had been done by the British parliament, and observing that it now remained for the parliament of Ireland to judge and decide upon the proposed agreement.

After considerable modification they are passed into a law.

In Ireland national prejudice counteracted national interest. During the progress of the discussion in England, the people in the neighbouring island had expressed great dissatisfaction, which had increased, as their orators expatiated on the propositions that had been chiefly opposed in the British parliament. Mr. Flood and Mr. Grattan peculiarly distinguished themselves by the eloquent harangues which stirred their countrymen to rage

Sent over to the Irish parliament.

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and indignation against Britain. Declaiming with glowing ardour against the whole system, they directed their invectives particularly to the fourth proposition, and to the ninth, which, restraining the Irish from trading to India, merely prevented them from infringing the chartered rights of the India company, and thus placed them exactly on the same footing with every British subject who was not a member of that corporation. The sentiments of the people so impressed, influenced a considerable number of the house of commons; so that when a corresponding bill was introduced, the majority in its favour was but small. The clamour against it was very loud, and petitions were very numerous. In these circumstances, it was deemed by the British legislature inexpedient to proceed any further, with overtures so misunderstood and misrepresented by the party to whom they were really so advantageous. From close connexion, Mr. Pitt had seen that very great advantages must accrue to both countries; commercial intercourse would, in addition to appropriate advantage, gradually tend to assimilation of character, and speedily produce reciprocity of interest; the result of both would be political harmony. If his propositions had been adopted, it is morally certain, that the bond of amity would have been drawn so close, as to have prevented subsequent events so calamitous to Ireland.

Messrs. Flood and Grattan oppose the propositions.

Their eloquence stirs their countrymen to rage and indignation.

They are abandoned by the British govment.

Their real merit.

INTRODUCTORY to financial details, Mr. Pitt this season took a general view of the state of pecuniary affairs, by comparing the public income with the public expenditure. The result of his statement and calculations was, that there would be such a surplus as would enable parliament to appropriate one million sterling to a sinking fund for the discharge of the national debt. At present, however, he had only seen the general practicability of the principle, but not having matured measures for such an appropriation, he chose to defer a specific plan till the following year. There remained unfunded upwards of ten millions of navy bills, and ordnance debentures: these were funded in the five per cents, taken at about ninety pounds, and a million was borrowed from the bank at five per cent. to supply deficiencies still re-

Mr. Pitt's statements of finance, and intimation of a plan for paying the national debt.

maining from the expenses of the war. The new taxes were, an additional duty on male servants; a duty on female servants, increasing in a stated proportion according to the number, with a farther charge to bachelors having such servants; a tax on attorneys, on posthorses, on carriages, coachmakers, pawnbrokers, gloves, and retail shops; besides one hundred and fifty thousand pounds raised by a lottery. On the 8th of August, on a message from the king, parliament was adjourned to the 27th of October, and afterwards prorogued by proclamation.

The session rises.

Affairs of Europe.

THE emperor and the Dutch still persevered in the contest about the Scheldt, but commotions in Germany unexpectedly arising, prevented him from bearing down upon Holland with his whole force. Joseph was become sensible, not only that other powers would not suffer him to open the Scheldt, but that his present possessions in the Netherlands were precarious; and finding one project likely to misgive, in the true spirit of an adventurer resolved to try another, by making an exchange with the elector of Bavaria, which should put the emperor in possession of the dutchy of Bavaria, with all the appendages confirmed at the peace of Teschen, and make the elector sovereign of the Austrian Netherlands, which, more to render the proposal palatable, was to be erected into a kingdom. This scheme would have been very advantageous to Austria, by the accession of a large and productive country, which, surrounding and completing the Austrian dominions, would have consolidated and compacted so great a body of power as would overbalance the other states of Germany. A man of deep reflection, in the very important advantages of the object, would have discovered an unsurmountable obstacle to its attainment; that the king of Prussia and other members of the Germanic body would not suffer the establishment of a power that must overbear themselves; profound sagacity, however, was no part of Joseph's character. Ambitious in design, but fantastic in project, and light in counsel, he very superficially investigated circumstances, and imperfectly calculated the probabilities of success. As soon as he had formed his scheme, he communicated it to the court of Petersburgh. Catharine who perfectly compre-

Designs of the emperor upon Bavaria.

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hended the character of the emperor, studiously cultivated amity with a prince, whom she could render so powerful a coadjutor to herself. She most readily acceded to hasty and ill digested schemes for gratifying his ambition, that thereby she might prevent his obstruction, and secure his cooperation to the mature and well digested plans she had formed for extending her power and dominions; she also joined him in making overtures to the house of Bavaria, but these were peremptorily and indignantly rejected. The king of Prussia being informed of the proposal, made very strong remonstrances; and having concerted with the two chief powers of Northern Germany, the electors of Saxony and Hanover, he effected a confederation for maintaining the indivisibility of the empire. The court of Vienna did every thing in its power to stop the progress of the combination, but it was joined by most of the other states, and France was known to be favourable to its object. Besides the insuperable impediments to the projects of Joseph from the well founded jealousy of foreign powers, great intestine commotions prevailed in his own dominions; his numberless innovations in the civil and religious establishments of Hungary and its appendages, had the usual effect of schemes of reform founded on abstract principles, without regard to the character, sentiments, and habits of the people, and produced much greater evils than those which they professed to remedy; by violating customs, offending prejudices, annulling prescriptions, and trenching on privileges, he drove his subjects to dissatisfaction, insurrection, and rebellion: to quell the revolters required powerful and expensive efforts, nor were they finally reduced till the close of the campaign: these various causes prevented hostilities from being commenced against the states general. Pacific overtures were resumed under the mediation of the court of France, and the management of the count de Vergennes, the French prime minister: the Dutch agreed to pay Joseph a certain sum of money in lieu of his claims over Maestricht, which he renounced for ever, and also resigned his pretensions to the free navigation of the Scheldt: less material disputes were compromised and adjusted, and a treaty of peace was

Supported by Russia.

Opposed by Prussia and Hanover.

Abandons the navigation of the Scheldt, and concludes peace with Holland.

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concluded between Austria and Holland. Before the expiration of the year, the Dutch and France entered into a new alliance, offensive and defensive. France was internally occupied in schemes of diminution of the immense debts which she had contracted in the late war, and in the improvement of her manufactures and commerce. A merchant, raised to be prime minister, contributed to the speedy elevation of the mercantile profession in the opinion of Frenchmen; and trade, which before had been considered as derogatory to the character of a gentleman, was now highly respected. Numberless treatises in favour of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, flowed from the fertile ingenuity of their writers, which, if they did not much inform or convince acute and distinguishing understandings, by striking ductile imaginations, influenced a much more numerous class. The lively fancies, ardent feelings, and impetuous spirits of Frenchmen were now turned to mercantile adventure; they conceived themselves happily emancipated from the old prejudices which had kept many of their forefathers in proud poverty. On other subjects also, they fancied they had dispelled the clouds of ignorance, and were enlightened by the sunshine of reason. There was at this time a great multiplicity of ingenious writers in France, without that patient investigation, research, cautious consideration, and experimental reasoning, which only can lead to just, sound, and beneficial philosophy; to religious, moral, and political wisdom. A few eminent framers of hypotheses had given the tone to the rest; Helvetius, Rousseau, and Voltaire, taught infidelity to numerous classes of disciples, who admitted their doctrines upon the faith of their asseverations. Their multiplying votaries, professing to disregard all superstitious bigotry, were still Roman catholics in reasoning: they admitted *an infallible authority*, if not in the pope, in Jean Jacques; decrees from the mountains of Switzerland were received with no less veneration, than bulls had formerly been received from the Vatican; infidelity was become the prominent feature of the French character, and occupied the principal share of conversation in fashionable societies. The royal family, indeed, were not tinctured with the prevalent impie-

Treaty between France and Holland.

Internal state of France.

Multiplicity of ingenious writers.

Doctrines of Voltaire and Rousseau implicitly received.

Prevalence of infidelity.

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ty, but the indulgent liberality of the monarch did not watch and rigorously check such opinions with the vigilance which sound policy required, and neither he nor his ministers appeared to be aware of the dangers attending the diffusion of irreligion through a nation.

Great and increasing prosperity of Britain.

British commerce continued to increase and extend; the flourishing state of trade, together with the announced project of Mr. Pitt for the discharge of the national debt, raised the stocks in a short time from fifty-four to seventy, in the three per cents, consolidated the barometer of the other funds. The mercantile and moneyed interest, in its various departments and corporations, evidently reposed in the chancellor of the exchequer a confidence which they had bestowed upon no minister since the time of his father. They conceived the highest opinion of his integrity and talents, approved the principles on which he was proceeding, and the regulations he had actually proposed, and were thoroughly satisfied with the rapid advances of trade, as well as the increasing means of enlarging their capitals. While ministers impressed the public with a favourable idea of their qualifications to promote the prosperity of the country, the supporters of opposition were foremost in their efforts to amuse and entertain; wit and temporary satire appeared with brilliancy and force in the Rolliad, a mock heroic poem, of which the professed hero was a respectable and worthy gentleman, Mr. Rolle of Devonshire, a zealous friend of administration, and therefore held up by their opponents to ridicule. The notes on the poem display considerable humour, and illustrate the feelings, sentiments, and opinions of opposition, concerning the general politics of the times. The death of Mr. Warton, the poet laureat, also afforded an occasion to ingenuity for exhibiting a sarcastic account of ministerial characters in the *birth-day odes*; performances satirically inscribed with the names of various gentlemen and noblemen as candidates for the vacant office, and, as in characteristic compositions, presenting specimens of their poetical powers by odes on the king's birth-day. The respective essays painted the alleged foibles of the chief supporters of the cabinet: viewed together, the Rolliad and the birth-day odes presented ministerial men and measures in the

Confidence of the monied interest in the talents and integrity of Mr. Pitt.

Satirical literature.

light in which the satirists of opposition at this period wished them to be beheld, and are not therefore unconnected with the serious literature and politics of the anti-ministerial party.

Question of literary property.

A CAUSE affecting literary property was this year determined by the court of session, the chief civil tribunal of Scotland. The compilers of the Scottish Encyclopedia had inserted in that work large extracts from Dr. Gilbert Stewart's history of Scotland, and his history of the reformation of Scotland: Mr. Stewart prosecuted them for piracy, and the transcripts being long and continuous, the court, having a power of determining equitably as well as legally, gave sentence in favour of the prosecutor, on the ground that the defenders had quoted more, and with less interruption, than was allowed by the rules of literary property. The principle of the judgment appeared to be, that large and connected passages copied from a literary work, tend to injure the sale of that work, and consequently lessen the value of the property to the rightful owner.

Return of Mr. Hastings, a great subject of temporary literature.

PEACE having been now completely established between the East India company and Tippoo Saib, tranquillity was diffused over British India. During the recess, Mr. Hastings, the governor general returned; and the periodical writings of the times teemed with attacks and vindications of his character.

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Meeting of parliament.—King's speech.—Views of Mr. Fox concerning continental alliances.—The duke of Richmond's scheme for fortifying the dock yards—submitted to parliament.—Arguments for and against.—Speech of Mr. Sheridan on the fortifications.—The bill is rejected by the casting vote of the speaker.—Alteration in the mutiny bill.—Mr. Pitt's plan for appropriating an annual million to the payment of the national debt.—Mr. Sheridan takes the most active part in controverting the minister's financial propositions.—Farther measures of the minister for preventing frauds against the revenue.—Proposes to subject foreign wines to the excise.—A bill for the purpose is passed into a law.—Bill appointing commissioners to examine the crown lands.—The conduct of Mr. Hastings becomes a subject of inquiry.—Public opinion concerning Mr. Hastings.—Mr. Burke opens the subject.—His introductory speech.—Proposes to proceed by impeachment.—Presents a summary of the alleged criminal acts.—A majority, including Mr. Pitt, finds ground of impeachment in the proceedings against Cheyt Sing.—Mr. Dundas's bill for improving the government of British India.—Supplies.—Session terminates.

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1786. Meeting of parliament, and the king's speech.

ON the 24th of January 1786, parliament was assembled. The speech from the throne mentioned the amicable conclusion of the disputes which had threatened the tranquillity of Europe, and the friendly dipositions of foreign powers towards this country: it expressed the royal satisfaction, that his majesty's subjects now experienced the growing blessings of peace in the extension of trade, improvement of revenue, and increase of public credit. For the farther advancement of those important objects, the king relied on the continuance of that zeal and industry which was manifested in the last session of parliament. The resolutions which they had laid before

him, as the basis of an adjustment of the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland, had been by his direction recommended to the parliament of that kingdom, but no effectual step had hitherto been taken, which could enable them to make any farther progress in that salutary work. His majesty recommended to the house of commons the establishment of a fixed plan for the reduction of the national debt; a measure which, he trusted, the flourishing state of the revenue would be sufficient to effect, with little addition to the public burdens.

THE objectsproposed by the sovereign for parliamentary deliberation, were evidently of such primary importance, that the speech and corresponding address afforded little opportunity for animadversion from opposition. Without objecting to the address, Mr. Fox expatiated into a very wide field of continental politics. He went over the state and recent transactions of Russia, Germany, Holland, and France, and endeavoured to prove, that the accession of the king, as elector of Hanover, to the Germanic confederation, would disgust the emperor with this country, and indispose him to an alliance with Britain in any future war. Viewing the interests and relations of the various states of the continent, he deduced from them the principles of alliance which he judged most expedient for this country to adopt. From the connexion between France and Spain, the emperor was the only power whose cooperation could occupy the exertions of France by land, and thereby prevent her from directing to maritime contests such efforts as she had employed in the recent war. An intercourse both commercial and political with Russia, was also an object of the highest consequence to this country; a favourable opportunity had been lost, but still an advantageous alliance might be concluded. He understood that a treaty was on the point of being established between Britain and France; and he strongly reprobated the policy of such a measure, appealing to the experience of former times, which (he said) proved that this nation had become powerful and flourishing, from the moment that she quitted all commercial connexion with France. With strictures on the Irish propositions and the India bill, he concluded a speech, which, as usual with opposition on the first day

Views of Mr. Fox concerning continental alliances.

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of the session, exhibited a statement of all the alleged errors and miscarriages of ministers. In replying, Mr. Pitt made an introductory observation, deserving peculiar attention, as it very strongly exhibited a prominent feature in the eloquence of his opponent. "Mr. Fox (he "said) discovered most extraordinary dexterity in leaving "out of a discussion[s] such parts belonging to the subject "as did not suit his purpose to be brought forward, and a "similar dexterity of introducing, however foreign to the "question, such matter as he expected would be favour-"able." By reverting to the course of Mr. Fox's oratory during the administration of lord North, the reader will perceive this remark of the minister not to be groundless. Mr. Fox had often allowed himself unbounded liberty of expatiation, and roamed at large in the wide regions of invective. Lord North had most frequently followed his adversary through the devious tracts, and much time was spent by both orators in contentions on subjects which were foreign to the immediate business of the house. Forcible as Mr. Fox was in argument; dexterous, skilful and ingenious, as lord North was in eluding a strength which he could not meet; the reasoning of both wanted closeness, and compacted arrangement: besides, as of two very able combatants Mr. Fox was incomparably the superior, lord North in his tactics naturally imitated, in order to parry his assailant. Mr. Pitt was of a different cast, and character; he was far from being under the necessity of shifting blows that he could repel by equal force, and return with well directed effort. Disciplined in reflection and argumentation, as well as powerful in talents, he thoroughly knew his own ground, and his ability to maintain it in any mode which he judged expedient; he was not therefore to be hurried away by the evolutions of his adversary. Mr. Pitt at this time declared an intention, to which in the course of his parliamentary warfare he generally adhered, that let Mr. Fox range ever so wide into extraneous subjects, he should confine his answers to what he conceived relative to the purpose. In the present debate, he observed,

[s] See parliamentary reports for 1786, Jan. 24.

various topics had been discussed by Mr. Fox, such as the politics of the emperor and the German confederacy, which were not within the control of the house: the treaty with Russia was in considerable forwardness, but neither that proposition nor the negotiation with France were yet proper to be discussed; objections were therefore premature, and only hypothetical concerning a subject so imperfectly known. Fox replied, by placing his former observations in a new light, without any fresh argument; and no general debate having ensued, the address was carried without a division.

Duke of Richmond's scheme for fortifying the dockyards.

THE first important object that occupied the deliberations of parliament, was a measure which originated with the duke of Richmond, master general of the ordnance. Intelligent and ardent, this nobleman had paid peculiar attention to mathematics, as a groundwork of military skill, especially gunnery and fortification, and desired to rest a great portion of the national defence against the approaches of an enemy, on the abilities and exertions of an engineer. In these sentiments he was confirmed by his conception of recent events. The late war had seen the Bourbon armadas hovering on our coasts: accident only (he thought) secured us from the danger with which we were menaced: our country might have been attacked, our docks and harbours destroyed. Under this impression the duke from the time he became master of the ordnance, had been uniformly eager for adding to our defences a plan of fortification, and as we have seen, had inculcated this doctrine upon ministers. In the former session, a scheme of his grace for fortifying the dockyards of Portsmouth and Plymouth was incidently mentioned in the house of commons, without being introduced in a regular motion: the house expressed an unwillingness to apply the public money to the execution of such a scheme, until acquainted with the opinions of persons most competent to decide on the wisdom and utility of such a measure. That the desired information might be obtained, his majesty appointed a board of military and naval officers to take the project under consideration, and to meet for that purpose at Portsmouth with the duke of Richmond as their president. The instructions issued to

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this council propounded six hypothetical positions as themes for discussion, and annexed heads and questions for directing the application of the assumptions to the objects of inquiry.[t] The hypothesis on which the proposition was grounded was, that the fleet should be absent, or for some other cause prevented from affording its protection to the dockyards. In the first and second problems, this case was assumed and submitted to the council: the unanimous answer was, that if the dockyards were not defended by the fleet, fortifications would be necessary.[u] The four subsequent heads of consultation were grounded upon this basis; and presupposing the absence of the fleet, examined the probable force with which an enemy might invade Britain during such absence of our navy, the troops that might be expected to be ready, the time in which the strength of the country could be collected, and the insufficiency of the present works to hold out until an army were assembled to oppose the invaders. Concerning these subordinate questions, there was considerable diversity of opinion; the greater number, however, delivered a report, which approved the scheme of fortification as requisite for the supposed emergency, but gave no opinion on the probability that such a crisis would arise. Lord Percy and general Burgoyne, with several naval officers, went beyond the given case, and represented the hypothetical event as so extremely unlikely to happen, that it was neither wise nor expedient to provide against it by the expensive system which was proposed. Admirals Milbanke and Graves, captains Macbride, Hotham, Jarvis, and some others, explicitly affirmed the fortifications to be totally unnecessary. The opinion of the majority of land officers did not amount to an approbation of the scheme, as actually right to be executed in the present state of the country; but was merely an assent to the alleged necessity of fortifying the docks, if the country afforded no other means of defence, and no more than an admission of a conditional proposition as true,

t See instructions transmitted to the board of officers, dated April 13th, 1785, with extracts from the reports of the board, as laid before the house of commons on the 27th of February, 1786.

u See opinion of officers on the first and second data.

in the circumstances which its author supposed. So bounded an acquiescence was construed by the duke of Richmond to authorise the immediate adoption of his plan; to which the cabinet ministers acceding, a board of engineers was directed to make an estimate of the expense and the requisite sum, as stated by these gentlemen, amounted to 760,097l. After preparatory motions for the production of papers, Mr. Pitt, on the 27th of February, introduced the plan in the following general resolution: "It appears to this house, that to provide effectually for securing his majesty's dockyards at Portsmouth and Plymouth by a permanent system of fortification, founded on the most economical principles, and requiring the smallest number of troops possible to answer the purpose of such security, is an essential object for the safety of the state, intimately connected with the general defence of the kingdom, and necessary for enabling the fleet to act with full vigour and effect for the protection of commerce, the support of our distant possessions, and the prosecution of offensive operations in any war in which the nation may hereafter be engaged."

Is submitted to parliament.

THE favourers of the measure founded their arguments on the report of the board of officers, which stated, that neither naval nor military force, nor even both united, could afford a security adequate to the importance of our dockyards; fortifications were therefore absolutely necessary, in addition to both. They represented the duke of Richmond's scheme as the most eligible that could be adopted, since it was sufficient for the requisite defence, capable of being manned by the smallest force, demanded the least expense to erect, and afforded an increasing degree of security in the course of the construction. These works, moreover, would give greater scope to our fleets: because the dockyards being thus protected, the navy would consequently be unfettered, and left at liberty to act as occasion might require, in whatever part of the world its presence might be necessary; and they would also reduce the standing army. Were an invasion threatened, and were we to trust only to our military force, there would be a necessity for augmenting to a most enormous degree that army on which the whole safety of the

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kingdom was to rest; but, if it were assisted with fortifications, a much smaller force would answer the purpose. An alarm had prevailed, that the measure was unconstitutional in its tendency, by laying a foundation for a standing army, and diverting into an useless and dangerous channel those resources which should strengthen our navy: far from rendering an increase of troops necessary, the proposed plan would actually tend to remove the necessity of keeping up so large a military establishment as otherwise must be maintained.

Arguments against it.

THESE arguments were by no means received without opposition and controversy; but the speaker who most peculiarly distinguished himself, was Mr. Sheridan, who was fast rising to very high oratorial fame and political importance. On the present question he exhibited the substance of all the reasoning that could be adduced against the scheme, and contended, that in itself and in its consequences the project was dangerous and unconstitutional; that the nature and circumstances of the report made by the board of officers did not warrant or authorize the system; fortifications would not reduce the standing army, or if they did, they would still be constituents of strength to the crown, even should it interfere with the rights and liberties of the people. The possible existence of this case was implied in the provisions of the bill of rights, and in the salutary and sacred reserve with which, for a short and limited period, we annually intrusted the executive magistrate with the necessary defence of the country.

Mr. Sheridan's speech on the fortifications.

The orator first viewed the question on the general ground of constitutional jealousy, respecting the augmentation of military force. This sentiment, so natural to Britons, implied no suspicion personally injurious to the individual sovereign, or even his ministers; it merely considered kings and their counsellors as actuated by the same passions with other men: princes were fond of power; from the constitution of the army it must obey the executive ruler, therefore it ought to be circumscribed as much as was possibly consistent with the public safety. Soldiers were maintained for national defence and security, and were not to be multiplied beyond the necessity in which only they could originate. The minister had

endeavoured to anticipate this forcible objection to the new plan, by persuading the house that the fortifications would lessen, instead of enlarging the standing army; but his arguments on the subject could not stand the test of examination. If it was proper to fortify Portsmouth and Plymouth, the reasons which justified such a measure would apply to every other port in the kingdom, which might be of sufficient importance to require defence. The plan, as it now stood, proceeded upon two suppositions extremely improbable; the first was, That we should be so much inferior on our own seas, as to permit the enemy to land: secondly, That if they did invade Britain, they would choose to attack the only places we had fortified. Might they not, on such a supposition, land between Plymouth and Portsmouth; or in Sussex, Kent, or the eastern coasts, and strike at the heart of the empire? If fortification was to be our defence, there must be a circle of fortresses round the coasts; the completion of such a project would require a military establishment, extensive beyond all former example. The safety of England rested on our navy, the courage and enterprise of our people, and not upon ramparts and intrenchments. The proposed fortifications would not be our safeguard against an invasion; but though far from being beneficial, they might be efficacious: the garrisons requiring such an additional number of standing troops, in the hands of an ambitious prince or minister might be employed against the liberties of the people. The proposition was not only unconstitutional, unnecessary, and absurd, but unauthorized by the report of officers; mutilated as the statement was which had been submitted to the house, it did not contain grounds for justifying the scheme. The opinion of naval officers had been withheld, but the opinion of land officers was founded upon hypothetical and conditional suggestions, and upon such *data* as the master general had proposed to them; for the truth or probability of which, the board invariably refused to make themselves responsible. In this part of his speech, Sheridan diversified his close and poignant reasoning by an interspersion of wit most happily appropriated to the subject. The report (he said) had been so artfully framed, that the board of officers ap-

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peared to have admitted the *data;* whereas they only assented to conclusions, which in their opinion would ensue on the assumption of the *data.* The master general of the ordnance deserved the warmest panegyrics for the striking proofs which he had given of his genius as an engineer, which appeared even in planning and constructing the report in question; the professional ability of the master general shone conspicuously there, as it would upon our coasts: he had made an argument of posts, and conducted his reasoning upon principles of trigonometry as well as logic. There were certain detached *data*, like advanced works to keep the enemy at a distance from the main object in debate; strong provisions covered the flanks of his assertions, his very queries were in casemates; no impression therefore was to be made on this fortress of sophistry by desultory observations, and it was necessary to sit down before it, and assail it by regular approaches. It was fortunate, however, he said, to observe, that notwithstanding all the skill employed by the noble and literary engineer, his mode of defence on paper was open to the same objection which had been urged against his other fortifications, that, if his adversary got possession of one of his posts, it became strength against him, and the means of subduing the whole line of his argument. No supporter of the bill undertook to refute the arguments of Mr. Sheridan: many who usually voted with administration, were averse to the present measure; even Mr. Pitt was believed not to be very eager for its success, and the event was certainly different from the issue of most of his propositions; for when the question came to a division, the numbers were equal, and the casting vote of the speaker negatived the motion.

Soon after the defeat of a scheme which tended to increase military establishments, a bill was introduced for enlarging the authority of military courts, by subjecting to their jurisdiction officers who held commissions by brevet. This clause occasioned a strenuous opposition in both houses: the ground of disapprobation was the arbitrary nature of martial law, which was justified only by necessity, and therefore ought to be extended no farther than necessity required. Its object was to secure the

discharge of duty on actual military service, therefore it ought not to operate out of that service. The supporters of the motion contended, that such officers might be invested with command, and therefore should be made subject to a court martial in case of professional misbehaviour; there were also many other military officers who were not mustered, such as governors and lieutenant governors, who might eventually exercise command, and ought therefore to become amenable to the laws which bind other soldiers: persons choosing to have the advantage of military rank, should hold it on the condition of complying with military rules; and if they disliked the terms, they might ease themselves of their grievance by resigning their commissions. On these grounds the clause was carried in both houses.

Plan of Mr. Pitt for reducing the national debt.

On the 29th of March, Mr. Pitt brought forward his plans[x] for the reduction of the national debt. A committee had been appointed early in the session, in order to investigate and exactly ascertain the public income and expenditure, and strike the balance: the result of the investigation from the income of the year 1785, was,

Income	—	£. 15,379,132
Expenditure,	—	14,478,181

So that a surplus of more than £. 900,000 remained; and on this basis Mr. Pitt formed his scheme. He proposed that, by taxes neither numerous nor burdensome, the balance might be raised to a million: by a succinct and clear view of our finances he demonstrated, that excess of income beyond expenditure was in the present and following years likely to increase; but in making his calculations, he had contented himself with concluding that it would not decrease. This million was to be appropriated unalienably to the gradual extinction of the national debt. Several savings of expense and increases of revenue, especially through the customs from the suppression of smuggling, would add to the national income: annuities would also fall into the same fund; the accumulated compound added to these sources would, in twenty-eight years, if properly

Is submitted to parliament.

x The minister is believed to have availed himself of the financial ability of Dr. Price, who so thoroughly understood political arithmetic.

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managed, produce an annual revenue of four millions to the state. For the management of this fund, commissioners were to be appointed to receive two hundred and fifty thousand pounds quarterly, with the full power of employing it in the purchase of stock. In choosing persons to be intrusted, Mr. Pitt proceeded on his general principle, which had been already exhibited in his India bill; that in circumstances requiring new delegation of executorial power, the trust should be vested in men whose official situation presumed their competency to the execution of the commission; the speaker of the house of commons, the chancellor of the exchequer, the master of the rolls, the governor and deputy governor of the bank of England, and accountant general, were gentlemen whose nomination he recommended. After illustrating his calculations, and the advantages of his scheme, he compressed the substance into the following motion: "That the sum of one million "be annually granted to certain commissioners, to be by "them applied to the purchase of stock, towards dis-"charging the public debt of this country; which money "shall arise out of the surplusses, excesses, and overplus "moneys, composing the fund commonly called the sink-"ing fund." The policy of contracting expenditure within income, in order to liquidate debt, was so obviously just, that no one dissented from the principle, but various objections were made to the scheme. These are reducible to two general heads: first, that the alleged excess did not exist; secondly, that admitting its existence, the proposed mode of application was not the best that might be adopted. On this subject, Mr. Sheridan took a leading part in opposition; he moved a series of resolutions, declaring there were not sufficient grounds to establish the existence of the asserted surplus; that the calculations were founded upon one year peculiarly favourable, and not upon such a number of succeeding years as could constitute a fair average; and that in the existing accounts even of that year, at least in the report of the committee, there were certain articles erroneously stated to the credit of income, and others erroneously assigned to the diminution of expenditure. He, however, neither proved the

Mr. Sheridan takes the most active part in controverting the financial propositions of the minister.

alleged errors, nor the impropriety of calculating from 1785, the first year to which any reasoning on the reduced expenditure, or growing revenue of a peace establishment and rising trade, could apply. The objections to the mode were principally adduced against the appropriation being unalienable in any circumstances: in times of war and pecuniary emergency, it might be expedient to have recourse to the present fund, instead of a loan. To modify this objection, Mr. Fox proposed, that in a future loan the commissioners might accept of as much of it as they could pay from the public money in their hands; and thus, besides a prevention of that amount of future debt which would be equivalent to the redemption of the past, the public would be gainers by the profits which would accrue from such a loan.[y] Mr. Pitt not only adopted, but highly applauded this clause: Mr. Pulteney proposed that the commissioners should continue purchasing stock for the public when at or above par, unless otherwise directed by parliament. This provision, of which the object was to attach to parliament the responsibility of giving instructions to the commissioners, if necessary in the specified circumstances, was adopted. The bill containing the original principle and plan, though with some modification of the latter, passed through both houses, and received the royal assent.

Further measure of Mr. Pitt for preventing frauds against the revenue. He proposes to subject foreign wines to the excise.

Mr. Pitt had examined the frauds against the revenue with minuteness and fullness of inquiry. In no subject of impost he found they were more prevalent than in wine: the present amount of the revenue resulting from that article was less by two hundred and eighty thousand pounds, than in the middle of the last century, yet it was manifest that the consumption was greatly increased since that period: he attributed the defalcation, first, to the fraudulent importation of large quantities of foreign wine, without paying the duties: secondly, and principally, to the sale of a spurious liquor under the name of that beverage. To remedy this evil, he proposed a bill for subjecting foreign wines to the excise; by this means they could

y For instance, if there were a loan of six millions of which the commissioners contracted for one million, and there was a *bonus* of two per cent. the public would gain 20,000*l*.

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no longer fraudulently escape the payment of the revenue, as the excise, by its opportunities of more completely vigilant inspection, could much more effectually prevent smuggling, if attempted; and there would not be the same motives to adulteration, when the substitute should have to pay the same duty as the genuine; the consequence would be, that the public would, without an additional price, procure better wine, and the revenue would be much greater, which would produce an increased demand for our manufactures, and thus the mass of productive industry would be augmented. For all these reasons, Mr. Pitt recommended the adoption of his plan. The arguments against it rested on two grounds: first, general, on the impolicy and unconstitutional tendency of extending the excise laws; secondly, special, on the inexpediency of the mode. These necessarily turned on topics often discussed, the collection of the duty by inspecting and searching private houses, the summary proceedings against offenders. Under the second head it was contended, that the practice of gauging, so applicable to brewers, was perfectly incompatible with respect to such an article as wine; that continual increase and diminution of the trade stock would baffle the endeavours of the officers to keep a regular account: as these objections did not apply more forcibly to wine than to liquors already subject to the excise, they made little impression; the bill passed through both houses, and received the royal assent.

A bill for the purpose is passed into a law.

Bill for appointing commissioners to examine the crown laws.

In consequence of a message from the king, Mr. Pitt, on the 20th of June, introduced a bill for appointing commissioners to inquire into the state and condition of the woods, forests, and land revenues belonging to the crown. Against this proposition it was contended, that the powers granted to the commissioners were contrary to the security of the subjects, whose rights, founded in prescription, would be invaded. It subjected all persons who held of the crown, or possessed estates adjoining to the crown lands, to an inquisition into their ancient boundaries and title deeds, at the mere motion of the commissioners, without any other legal or ordinary process. It was supported on the ground of expediency, that it was proper and wise to ascertain the condition of these lands, in order

to see of what improvements they were susceptible. In the commons, the bill encountered no material opposition; in the peers, lord Loughborough argued strongly against the proposition: he and other lords entered a protest; but it passed by a majority of twenty-eight to eighteen. Mr. Marsham proposed a bill for extending, to persons employed by the navy and ordnance, the disqualifications contained in Mr. Crew's bill of 1782, for preventing revenue officers from voting at elections of members of parliament. The proposition was controverted by Mr. Pitt; the situation of persons intended by Mr. Crew, and of those now designed to be excluded, was totally different: the revenue officers were under the influence of government, but the persons employed in the departments in question were subject to no control; they were at all times capable of procuring what was equal to their present salaries in foreign services, or from our merchants at home; the former were dependent upon the crown, the latter totally independent; no fair argument could therefore be adduced from the disfranchisement of the one set, for disqualifying the other: on these grounds the proposed bill was rejected.

The conduct of Mr. Hastings becomes a subject of inquiry.

A DISCUSSION was now begun in the house of commons, which long occupied the attention of parliament and the public; this was the conduct of Warren Hastings, esq. late governor general of India. Early in the session, major John Scott, late confidential secretary to Mr. Hastings, and now a member of the house of commons, reminded Mr. Burke of his charges against the governor general, said that he was now returned from India, and called on his accuser to bring forward the allegations of criminality, that they might undergo the inquiry and receive the decision of the house. Major Scott was, doubtless, warmly attached to Mr. Hastings, and perfectly confident of his innocence; nevertheless, the prudence of such a challenge is very questionable. Many warmly approved of Mr. Hastings's character and administration, and conceived him the saviour of India from a native combination co-operating with the ambition of France; these admirers could not estimate him more highly than at present, though he were freed from charges which they thought altogether

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unfounded, while persons of a contrary opinion might not be convinced even by his acquittal. Mr. Scott undoubtedly knew, that however innocent his friend might really be, there was a great body of oral and written evidence in the reports of the committees, which tended to establish the opposite belief, or at any rate to leave the issue doubtful; the multiplicity and complexity of allegations would certainly render the process extremely tedious. From all these circumstances, an inquiry and trial must involve its subject in a labyrinth of difficulty, even were the ultimate event to be favourable. The zeal, therefore, which produced this defiance, was evidently imprudent; by rousing charges that might have lain dormant, it actually proved highly injurious to him whom it was intended to serve. Mr. Burke did not immediately answer major Scott's summons, but within a few days opened the discussion. On the 17th of February he brought the subject before the house, and in an introductory speech traced the history of the proceedings of parliament respecting the affairs of British India, and also the alleged misconduct of the company's servants, from the period of lord Clive's government to the reports of the secret and select committees, the resolutions moved thereupon, and the approbation repeatedly given to these proceedings by his majesty from the throne. On the authority, the sanction, and the encouragement thus afforded him, he rested his accusation of Mr. Hastings as a delinquent of the first magnitude. There were three species of inquisition against a state culprit: first, prosecution in the courts below, which, in the present case, he thought very inadequate to the complicated nature and extent of the offence, and the enormity of the offender: secondly, a bill of pains and penalties of which he disapproved as a hardship and injustice to the accused, by obliging him to anticipate his defence, and by imposing on the house two relations that ought ever to be kept separate, those of accusers and of judges. The only process that remained, was by the ancient and constitutional mode of impeachment. The first step in such a cause, was a general review of the evidence, to enable them to determine whether the person charged should be impeached. If the general question was carried in the affirmative, they

Mr. Burke opens the subject. His introductory speech. He proposes to proceed by impeachment;

must next appoint a committee to divide and arrange the evidence, under the heads of which the impeachment should consist. He proposed, previously to a resolution of impeachment, that the evidence should be particularly investigated by a committee of the whole house, that they might be well acquainted with the grounds of procedure before they should attempt to proceed. He eloquently described the disagreeable nature of an accuser's office, and contended that it was not imposed on him by choice, but by necessity. He moved for the production of papers alleged to contain evidence relative to the subject, and endeavoured to show that Mr. Dundas, who in 1782 had moved the recal of Mr. Hastings, ought to have taken a lead in the present business. Mr. Dundas acknowleged that he had recommended the recal of Mr. Hastings as politically expedient, but denied that this proposition expressed, or even implied, any judicial charge of criminal conduct, which consistency would require him to support; if there was appearance of guilt, he agreed that it ought to be investigated, that if found to be real, adequate punishment might be inflicted. No objection was made to the production of the papers which were then specified; but Mr. Burke continuing at subsequent meetings to move for various other documents Mr. Pitt, before he would agree to the requisition, proposed that the accuser should exhibit an abstract of the charges which he intended to adduce, that the house might judge whether the papers required or to be required were relevant to the elucidation of the subject. Mr. Burke read a short outline of the charges, and pointed out the matters which the writings were intended to explain and substantiate. The charges were twenty-two in number: first, the Rohilla war: second, the detention of revenues of the province of Cola Alla Habad: third, the proceedings respecting Cheyt Sing: fourth, the conduct towards the princesses of Oude: fifth and sixth, the treatment of two rajahs: seventh, extravagant contracts made by Mr. Hastings in the name of the company: eighth, illegal presents: ninth, disregard of the orders of the East India company: tenth, eleventh, and twelfth, extravagant contracts on account of the company, and enormous salaries bestowed on officers of his own institution: thirteenth,

and presents a summary of alleged criminal acts.

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ambassadors sent to Arcot and the decan: fourteenth, the Mahratta treaty: fifteenth, the management of the revenues of Bengal: sixteenth, the ruin of the province of Oude: seventeenth, the dismissal of Mahomed Khan from the internal management of Bengal: eighteenth, treatment of the mogul: nineteenth, a libel upon the directors: twentieth, the Mahratta war: twenty-first the suppression of correspondence: twenty-second, the treatment of Fizullakham. Of these articles, by far the most distinguished were the third and fourth: Mr. Burke employed the remainder of February and the whole of March in moving for papers and preparing his accusations. On the 4th of April he charged Warren Hastings, esquire, late governor general of Bengal, with sundry high crimes and misdemeanors; nine of his articles he then delivered, and the other thirteen the following week. Mr. Hastings petitioned the house that he might be heard in his defence, and that he might be allowed a copy of the accusation. The first request the prosecutors granted: Mr. Burke objected to the last, at so early a stage of the prosecution; he was, however, overruled. The month of May was chiefly occupied in examining evidence; and on the first of June, Mr. Burke adduced his first charge, in the following terms: "That there are grounds sufficient to charge "Warren Hastings, esq. with high crimes and misde- "meanors, upon the matter of the said article." After a full discussion, it appeared to the house, that this war was unavoidable on the part of Mr. Hastings; this proposition was negatived by a majority of one hundred and nineteen to seventy-six. On the 3d of June, Mr. Fox brought forward the charges respecting Benares: he contended that Mr. Hastings had acted unjustly in his first demands; that his subsequent conduct was a continuation and increase of injustice, but that his last proceedings, when he arrived in that province, were flagrantly iniquitous and tyrannical, and had rendered the British name odious in India. On the other hand, it was argued that the demands of Mr. Hastings were agreeable to the established conduct of superiors in India, from their tributary dependents, in situations of danger and emergency: the circumstances of affairs were extremely critical; the governor general was reduced to the alternative of either requiring pecuniary

supplies, or wanting money to pay his troops, when their most strenuous efforts were necessary for saving India against the confederacy of France, and the native powers; the rajah's refusal, combined with various parts of his conduct, manifested disaffection to the British establishment, when Mr. Hastings went to Benares; Cheyt Sing was also in actual rebellion, and intimately connected with the allied enemies of British India. His conduct was therefore justified by necessity, as part of that general system of wise and comprehensive policy which preserved our important interests in Indostan. Mr. Pitt admitted that the situation of affairs at that period was extremely critical, but considered the proceedings at Benares beyond the exigence of the case, and necessity of the service. It was carried by a majority of one hundred and nineteen to seventy-nine, that there was a matter of impeachment in the charge in question.

A majority, including Mr. Pitt, finds ground of impeachment in the proceedings against Cheyt Sing.

During these proceedings concerning part of the transactions in India, Mr. Dundas introduced a bill for the improvement of its government in future. Its principal object was to enlarge the powers of the governor general; first, by vesting in him the nomination of the vacant seats in the council; secondly, by limiting the officers of the governor general and commander in chief of the forces; and thirdly, by authorizing him to decide upon every measure, even though not agreeable to the council. The proposition was opposed by Mr. Burke, as tending to introduce despotic government into India; but its framer insisted, that the responsibility of the governor general was in proportion to his power, and that abuse of his trust was punishable by a fair and established judicature: he was himself satisfied, after a long and attentive inquiry into the affairs of India, that all the recent mischiefs in that country had arisen from the parties formed in the different councils, and the factious spirit which had almost uniformly pervaded these bodies. By his system, the governor general, on the one hand, would no longer be restrained by personal pique and factious opposition, from forming and executing such plans as he thought most conducive to the public good; yet, on the other hand, he was amenable to the laws of his country for any unjust, tyran-

Mr. Dundas's bill for improving the government of British India.

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ical, or injurious exercise of his power. The authority allowed to the officer in question, was founded on the same general principle, as that conferred on the several members of the British state, sufficiently extensive to effect the useful purposes required, and so clearly bounded as to prevent pernicious exercise.

Supplies.

THE supplies of this session were eighteen thousand seamen, and about thirty thousand soldiers. A loan was wanted, 2,500,000*l.* were to be raised by exchequer bills, paid as usual, from the first aids of the following year; about 200,000*l.* were to be raised by a lottery. There were no new taxes, but a duty of a penny per gallon on spirits, on deals and battens, on hair powder and pomatum, the whole being intended to make up the sum stated to be wanted; that the surplus of income might be the annual million appropriated to the liquidation of the national debt.

The session terminates.

ON the 11th of July his majesty closed the session by a speech from the throne, in which he testified the highest satisfaction with the measures adopted for improving the resources of the country, and reducing the national debt. He continued to receive assurances that the peace was likely to remain undisturbed; the happy effects of general tranquillity appeared in the extension of the national commerce, and he should adopt every measure tending to confirm these advantages, and to give additional encouragement to the manufactures and industry of his people.

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Continental affairs.—Death and character of Frederic of Prussia.—His provisions for the security of his successor.—Revolution in Denmark.—Queen dowager disgraced, and the reins of government assumed by the prince royal.—Physical calamities in various parts of the continent.—Commercial and political pursuits of France.—Amiable character of Lewis XVI.—Britain.—Alarming attempts against our sovereign,—providentially prevented.—Magnanimous humanity of the king.—The person proves to be a lunatic named Margaret Nicholson.—General consternation on hearing of the attempt.—Anxious affection of all ranks for their revered sovereign.—Congratulatory addresses.

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1786. Continental affairs. Death and character of Frederic of Prussia.

ON the continent of Europe, no event so much distinguished the year 1786, as the death of Frederic II. king of Prussia; who, for half a century, had acted such a conspicuous part on the grand military and political theatre. Were we to estimate his conduct on the simple principle, that a long and constant series of successes must arise from the possession and steady exertion of adequate qualities, we should find grounds for concluding, that the talents of Frederic, as a soldier, a statesman, and a lawgiver, were singularly eminent. Concerning a man who has long enjoyed the uncontrolled direction of any species of affairs, we may fairly and candidly ask, in what state did he find the subject of his trust? did any material advantage assist, or difficulty retard, its improvement? has he left the professed objects of his care in a better or worse situation? When the government of Prussia devolved upon Frederic, he found a small, inconsiderable, and disjointed kingdom, without arts, industry, or riches; and without either the disposition or means of rendering the territory productive, the inhabitants prosperous, or the state respectable. The

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treasury was scanty, and the income inferior to the necessary expenditure; his dominions were surrounded by powerful and jealous potentates, who commanded numerous, valiant and well disciplined armies: in such circumstances Frederic raised his country to be a great, well compacted, and flourishing empire. By teaching his subjects industry, agricultural skill, manufactures, and commerce, he bettered their condition, civilized their manners, enlightened their understandings, and enabled them to acquire the comforts and enjoyments of life. His kingdom which before occupied a small space in the geography, and still less in the politics of Europe, was by him rendered the terror of its most formidable foes, and the admiration of mankind. Great as was the result, there are more special grounds for estimating the character of Frederic than bare effects: his progress exhibits the operations of the most efficacious qualities; an understanding that grasped every object of necessary or useful consideration; an invention, rapidly fertile in resources, increased both in force and effort with the difficulties by which its exertion was required: self-possession never suffered his powers to be suspended by either peril or calamity; intrepid courage faced danger, and magnanimous fortitude, sustaining adversity, rendered misfortunes temporary, which would have overwhelmed others in destruction. Never had a leader with so small a force to contend with such a powerful combination, not of mere multitude (as when Asiatic enervation by feeble crowds impotently tried to overwhelm European strength,) but of hardy, disciplined, and veteran troops, equal to his own in prowess and military skill, and quadruple in number. Frederic experienced dismal reverses of fortune; having attained the highest pinnacle of success by dint of genius, he, rom incidents and circumstances, against which no wisdom could provide, was driven to the lowest abyss of disaster; the very existence of his kingdom became doubtful; his inflexible constancy, uninterrupted perseverance, and transcendent abilities, triumphed in calamities, and rose through adversity to victory and glory. His exertions during the seven years war demonstrated to his enemies, that all their attempts to crush Frederic were unavailing

against him, and recoiled on themselves. Hostilities being terminated, he had leisure to cultivate the arts of peace, and both in planning and executing measures for that purpose, he proved that his mind was formed for excelling not only in war, but in every other great and difficult pursuit to which circumstances might require the direction of his efforts. Complete comprehension of objects simplified plans for their attainment: the Prussian king was a great inventor in the military system, particularly in the mode of attack. His object was to render the assault irresistible in one or more points, so that the confusion produced there might be communicated to the whole line; the means were not merely to advance intrepidly and charge vigorously; but in the moment of onset to form such unforeseen and skilful dispositions, as would enable an army, greatly inferior in number, to surpass the enemy in exertion, and wherever the action was likely to prove most decisive, to bring a greater front to act against a smaller.[z] His internal improvements proposed at once to increase the resources and meliorate the character of his subjects; to render them, both from external circumstances and personal qualities, fitter for securing and extending individual and national prosperity, virtue, and happiness. Addicted himself to letters, he was extremely attentive to the education of his subjects, according to their circumstances, condition, or probable and destined pursuits. Tinctured with infidelity, he was far from encouraging its general diffusion. Totally free himself from bigotted prejudice or superstition, he knew the compatibility of such errors in others with most beneficial conduct, and granted every sect full and undisturbed toleration. That there were great alloys among Frederic's excellencies, he would be a partial panegyrist, not an impartial historian who should deny. The justice of several parts of his conduct in the early part of his reign was very questionable. One very important act in a later period admits of no dispute: the dismemberment of Poland will always remain a monument of exorbitant ambition and unjustifiable usurpation by Frederic and the other powers concerned. It would not

z See Gillies's Frederic.

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be difficult to evince, that both the subjects thus forcibly acquired were bettered in their condition by this annexation; but shallow would be the moralist who, from eventual and contingent good, would defend injustice. It might be easily shown that the greater number of victorious commanders, in proportion to their power, have been guilty of as ambitious usurpations as Frederic, and that not many of them have by their victories done so much good. In appreciating conduct we must consider the circumstances and opportunities of the agent, and the temptations which these produced; how very few men, it may be asked, having a very desirable object within their grasp, would abstain from possessing it, even though not conformable to strict justice. The perspicacious and recollecting observer of mankind must recognise such conduct to be natural, but the just estimator of moral sentiments and actions will reprobate it as unjust. Frederic, with considerable moral defects, possessed very high moral and the very highest intellectual excellencies; he raised a small, poor territory to be a great, opulent, and powerful kingdom; and rendered ignorant and uncivilized inhabitants an enlightened and civilized people. To a very great portion of mankind most momentous benefits have accrued from the efforts of the renowned Frederic.

His provisions for the security of his successor.

As the power of Prussia had arisen from the counsels and exertions of Frederic, many apprehended, that, resting on his character, its stability would be endangered by his death; and supposed, that the ambitious confederation of the imperial courts, so recently thwarted by the vigilant sagacity of Frederic, would take advantage of his death, and endeavour to reduce northern Germany to dependence. But the provisions of Frederic had not been temporary, to expire with his own life: he acquired and formed such strength and power as could be protected by mediocrity of talents, that he knew was to be generally expected in sovereigns as well as others, and which only he saw his immediate successor to possess. His counsellors had been trained by himself, and were likely to continue the plan of policy which the object of their adoration had delineated and conducted with so signal success. For the preservation of his dominions, Frederic bequeathed the most

effectual securities to his successor which human wisdom could provide or devise, by leaving him a full treasury, and a formidable army, wise and experienced counsellors, and a people enthusiastically attached to the government and memory of their illustrious king: The imperial powers thought it by no means expedient to interfere with a kingdom so powerfully protected, and were besides maturing their preparations for their own principal design, in the prosecution of which it was their obvious interests to win Prussia to forbearance, instead of provoking her to war. Thus the death of Frederic made no immediate perceivable difference in the politics of Europe.

Revolution in Denmark.

In Denmark a revolution had taken place in 1784, which proved very beneficial to that kingdom. Ever since 1772, the queen dowager having triumphed over the unfortunate and ill used Matilda, from the imbecility of the king, retained the supreme power which she had acquired by such unjustifiable means. Her sway was indeed established beyond all control, and beyond the probability of subversion. She had filled the great offices of state with her adherents and favourites; the son of the unhappy Matilda was a child, and the chances against his life at that tender age being considerable, Julia's son, prince Frederic, (the king's half-brother,) was regarded as the presumptive successor to the throne: all things seemed to concur in securing her influence and authority for life. The exercise of her dominion was far from dispelling the hatred which the dowager queen so deservedly incurred by her means of elevation. Imperious and tyrannical, she sacrificed the national good to the interests of her supporters and minions; and was hateful throughout the kingdom, except to her own creatures. Retribution though slow was not the less sure; as the prince royal approached to maturity, he indicated qualities that excited the hopes of the people in general, and especially of those, many in number, who were disgusted with the queen dowager's government. In the seventeenth year of his age, the heir of the crown, by his manly abilities and character, was become the universal favourite of the nation, and in a few months acquired such influence and power as to overwhelm the usurpers of his father's authority. With such

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wisdom and setresy had he formed his measures, that, being declared of age at seventeen, he was placed at the head of the council board; when he acquainted the junto that directed the affairs of the kingdom under the queen dowager, that the king his father had no farther occasion for their services, before they had conceived the most distant idea of their approaching downfal. Having dismissed these ministers, he published an ordinance, that no orders from the council of state were in future to be received, or considered valid, which had not been previously reported to the king, signed by him, and countersigned by the prince royal. Having accomplished so desirable and beneficial a change, the prince conducted himself with temperate, wise, and magnanimous policy toward the junto and its head. He abstained from punishing the planners and most active instruments of the revolution 1772, any farther than by the loss of their offices. On the queen herself he bestowed a superb castle and extensive demesnes in Holstein, whence it was understood she was not to return to court. Prince Frederic had never taken any share in his mother's cabals; to him his nephew presented great possessions, and made him second to himself in the cabinet council. His subsequent conduct confirmed and increased the opinion of his countrymen; he bestowed the closest attention on public business, and studied the political and commercial interests of Denmark. His highness planned and executed a very great and royal work, which was finished in 1786, the formation of a short and direct junction between the Baltic and the German ocean. This was effected by drawing a navigable canal from west to east across the peninsula of Jutland. Besides his attention to official duty, the prince manifested a disposition to literature, and became the patron of learning and learned men.

Queen dowager disgraced, and the reins of government assumed by the prince royal.

Physical calamities in various parts of the continent.

DURING this year and the two former, various parts of the world suffered dreadful calamities from physical causes. Earthquakes, which had so desolated Calabria and other parts of Europe, raged both in Asia and America. In Europe and the adjacent parts of Africa and Asia, there was a succession of severe and irregular seasons; violent storms of rain spread inundations over

the richest parts of Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and France. Rigorous cold destroyed the crops of Norway and Sweden; and the same causes prevented Livonia from affording them the usual supplies: even the fisheries of the north did not yield their wonted stores; the consequences were, that Norway, notwithstanding every effort of government, laboured under an absolute famine. In Iceland a new kind of calamity ravaged the country; mount Hecla, and the other volcanos which so much distinguish that island, although perhaps they promote the purposes of vegetation by communicating a genial warmth to its frozen bosom, have at all times been the terror, and at particular periods the scourge and destroyers, of the inhabitants. The present calamity, however, was totally new: the country with its products were now consumed by subterraneous fire. This destroyer of nature made its first appearance in June 1784, reduced to cinders every thing which it met, and continued burning until the month of May in the following year, having in that time extended its devastation about twenty leagues in length, and from four to five in breadth. The great river Skaptage, which was from seven to eight fathoms in depth, and half a league in width, was entirely dried up, its bed and channel presenting a dreadful yawning chasm.[a] A similar fire broke out about this time on the eastern side of the same range of mountains, and pursued its course in the opposite direction. The pestilence also raged with uncommon malignity over those countries which it usually pervades: from the Atlantic borders of Morocco to the extremities of Egypt, and from Palestine to the mouth of the Euxine, the African and Asiatic coasts of the Mediterranean, with those of Thrace on the opposite side, the cruelty of its ravages was severe, and the destruction of mankind greater, than at any period within the reach of memory, or perhaps within the records of history.

France persevered in her attention to maritime and commercial affairs, and endeavoured to increase the num-

a About a fourth part of the consumed soil consisted of a lava, and of mossy bogs or marshes; the remains of the burnt earth resembled vast heaps of calcined stones; and were of the colour of vitriol. Annual Register 1786, History of Europe, p. 60.

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1786. Commercial and political pursuits of it.

ber of her naval arsenals and harbours on the ocean. The port of Cherburg, on the coast of Normandy, from its vicinity to England, and lying directly opposite to Hampshire, seemed directly calculated for this purpose. Here the French were constructing a capacious basin, with docks and other requisites necessary to a great naval arsenal; the works were stupendous. It was proposed to cover the road, being about a league and a half in length, with a series of moles, leaving only two sufficient openings, one for the passage of ships of the largest size, and the other for trading vessels. Forts, with batteries of the heaviest cannon, were to be erected on the different moles, in such situations as to be impregnable, and to render the approach of an enemy utterly impracticable. M. Calonne, the prime minister of France, in order to open the way for the introduction of foreign industry, procured the publication of a law, which might be considered as a counterpart of the noted edict of Nantz. This was a decree, which invited strangers of all christian nations and religious persuasions to settle in the country, and enabled them to purchase lands and enjoy all the rights of citizens.[b] To encourage artists and manufacturers of all countries to settle in France, another ordinance was published, allowing them the same privileges which they enjoyed in their native lands, and for a limited time granting them an immunity from all duties on the importation of the raw materials that were used in their manufactures; also exempting them and their workmen from the payment of taxes, and every personal impost. On these conditions they were obliged to continue for a specified number of years in the kingdom, but, at the expiration of that term, they were at liberty to depart themselves, and to move their property wherever they chose. The king and his ministry were no less disposed to favour the

b The judicious author of the history of Europe, in the Annual Register of 1786, observes, that it afforded a singular object of moral and political consideration, to behold fourteen vessels from North America arrive together in the harbour of Dunkirk, freighted with the families, goods, and property of a colony of quakers and baptists (the most rigid, perhaps, in their religious principles of any among the reformed), who were to come to settle at that place, in a Roman catholic country, and under the government of the French monarch; two circumstances the most directly opposite to their ancient sentiments, whether politic or religious.

native protestants, as far as was consistent with the well being and security of the national church: indulgences were likewise extended this year to the peasants, who long had been grievously oppressed; they were relieved from various arbitrary exactions, both of labour and money, and their condition was in general meliorated. The great objects which the mild and benevolent Lewis pursued were, the improvement of the strength and productiveness of his kingdom, the alleviation of oppressions interwoven with the government, as it had descended to him from his ancestors, and the extension of the blessings of liberty to his people.

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Alarming attempt against our sovereign,

THE most remarkable domestic occurrence of the year was an attempt, originating in phrenzy, that fortunately answered no other purpose than to demonstrate the warm affection with which a happy, feeling, and grateful people regarded their sovereign. On Wednesday the 2d of August, his majesty came to town to the levee; as he was alighting from his carriage at the garden gate of St. James's palace, opposite to the duke of Marlborough's wall, a woman, decently dressed, presented to the king a paper folded up in the form of a petition; his majesty stooping to receive it, felt at his stomach a thrust, which passed between his coat and waistcoat; drawing back, he said, "What does the woman mean?" At that instant a yeoman of the guards laying hold of her arm, observed something fall from her hand, and called out, "'Tis "a knife!" The king said, "I am not hurt; take care "of the woman do not hurt her." Much affected by the attempt, his majesty said, in a voice expressive of tender feelings, "I am sure I have not deserved such treatment "from any of my subjects!" On opening the paper, when he entered the royal apartments, he found written: "To "the king's most excellent majesty;" the usual head to petitions; but nothing more. The woman was immediately taken into custody, and carried to the guard chamber. Being questioned how she could make such a wicked and daring attempt; her answer was, "That "when she was brought before proper persons, she would "give her reasons." From the hour of twelve to five she remained in a chamber to which she was conducted,

providentially prevented.

Magnanimous humanity of the king.

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but would not answer one word to any person. In the evening, after the levee was broken up, she was examined by the ministers, the law officers of the crown, and several magistrates. Her replies, claiming the crown as her property, and threatening the nation with bloodshed for many ages if her right was denied, indicated an insanity, which, from appearances, examination, and subsequent inquiry, was soon discovered to be real: her name proved to be Margaret Nicholson. It was imagined by many, that disappointment of her own, or some near connexion, concerning a place under government, had contributed to her insanity, and given her disordered fancy such a direction; but when her history was traced, it was found to have no relation to either the court or government. After a short consultation, it was resolved that she should be sent to Bethlehem hospital, where she has been confined ever since.

The attempter proves to be a lunatic named Margaret Nicholson.

Most providential it was, that this wretched creature made use of her left hand, her other presenting the petition; and that its position was such, that she could only aim obliquely. Had her right hand been employed, which, where she stood, could have struck directly, dismal might the consequence have been. Even with the aim which she took, the happiness of the nation, in the safety of its revered monarch, was highly indebted to our king's presence of mind. Had his majesty been thrown into confusion by a danger so unexpected, the fatal deed might have been perpetrated, before the attempt was perceived. Next to his magnanimity, the considerate humanity of the sovereign shone most evidently conspicuous. His benevolent injunction to abstain from hurting a person who had compassed against him so atrocious an act, most probably saved the assassin from the summary and immediate vengeance of his surrounding subjects. Similar conduct, in similar circumstances, this history has still to record, concerning the same exalted character. Fortunately for their feelings, neither her majesty nor any of the royal offspring were present. The intelligence of the danger was accompanied by the certain information that it was escaped. The report of the aim excited horror and indignant resentment through the nation, until the state of the per-

General consternation on hearing of the attempt.

Anxious affection of all ranks for their sovereign.

1786. Congratulatory addresses on the escape of the beloved sovereign.

petrator's mind was made generally known, and the dreadful impression of the calamity threatened yielded to delight that it had threatened in vain. The exquisite pleasure that results from terrible and impending evil avoided, poured itself in addresses of ardent and heartfelt loyalty from every quarter of the kingdom. His subjects before knew that they loved and revered their king; but now only felt the full force of these affections, when the impression present to their minds was the imminent danger of their object.

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Mr. Pitt's enlarged views on the relation between this country and France.—Perceives that peace and amicable intercourse is the interest of both countries.—Thinks past enmity not an unsurmountable bar to permanent reconciliation.—Projects a commercial intercourse, to be mutually beneficial by a reciprocal exchange of surplus for supply.—Seeks the best assistance, and employs the most skilful agents.—Principle and details of the treaty.—Meeting of parliament and the king's speech.—Treaty submitted to parliament.—Mr. Fox and his coadjutors oppose the treaty.—Arguments.—France the unalterable enemy of Great Britain.—Mutual interest can never eradicate that sentiment.—Every commercial connexion with France has been injurious to Britain.—For the treaty denied that there is any unalterable enmity between France and this country.—Not always enemies.—The repeated discomfiture of France, warring against the navy of England, at length taught her the policy of peace.—The treaty supported by a great majority.—Convention with Spain.—Consolidation of the customs.—Application of the dissenters for the repeal of the test act.—Number and respectability of the dissenters as a body.—Distinguished talents of some of their leaders.—Dissenters favourable to Mr. Pitt, and thence expect his support of their application.—Previous steps to prepossess the public in their favour.—Mr. Beaufoy demonstrates their zeal for liberty and the present establishment.—Lord North, a moderate tory, opposes their application, as inimical to the church.—Mr. Pitt opposes it on the grounds of political expediency.—The test no infringement of toleration, merely a condition of admissibility to certain offices of trust.—Eminent dissenters had avowed themselves desirous of subverting the church;—therefore not expedient to extend their power.—Application rejected.—Bill for the relief

of insolvent debtors.—Lord Rawdon's enlightened and liberal policy.—Bill negatived.—Inquiry about Scotch peerages.—Magnanimous sacrifice by the prince of Wales of splendor to justice.—Situation of his highness.—Satisfactory adjustments.—Proceedings respecting Mr. Hastings.—Writings in his defence.—The nation long averse to his impeachment.—Hastings's cause generally popular.—Eloquence gives a turn to public opinion.—Celebrated speech of Mr. Sheridan on the Begum charge.—Its effects on the house of commons and the public.—Singular instance of its impression on a literary defender of Mr. Hastings.—A committee appointed to prepare articles of impeachment.—The commons impeach Warren Hastings at the bar of the house of lords.—Supplies.—Favourable state of the finances.—Mr. Dundas brings forward the financial state of British India.—Promising aspect of affairs.

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Enlarged views of Mr. Pitt on the relations between Britain and France.

HISTORY recorded that France and England had been usually jealous, and often hostile: statesmen on both sides acted upon an assumption, that rivalry and enmity were unavoidable consequences of their situation; and therefore, that the chief objects of external policy to both, were reciprocal suspicion, and provision for probable enmity. The bold and soaring genius of Pitt was not to be trammelled by precedent: he investigated principle, and combining generalization with the experience of political systems and events, easily traced effects, either good or bad, to their causes; and could discover in what cases and circumstances, continuance, or change of plan or of practice, was expedient or unwise. The sagacity of this minister analized the history and spirit of the wars which had been carried on between Britain and France, since trade and navigation became so much the objects of European pursuits: and saw that they had commonly arisen from a desire on the side of France of equalling, and even surpassing, Britain on her peculiar element. He considered the event, as well as the origin; every endeavour of our neighbour to triumph by sea had diminished the riches and power which she sought to increase by a contest: both her commerce and naval force had been uni-

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formly reduced by the very wars, through which she attempted their extension. The resources of Britain had risen in proportion to the power which she was compelled to combat; and all the confederacies which her rival could form, were incapable of depriving this island of her maritime preeminence: hence it was evident, that no state which sought opulence and strength, through commercial efforts, acted wisely in provoking to conflict the mistress of the ocean, who could so effectually destroy the trade of her foes: it was therefore the interest of France to desist from that hostile policy which had so much obstructed the improvements of her immense resources. Peace with France was no less beneficial to Britain, which had so far consulted her advantage, as to abstain from offensive hostility against her neighbour: within the period of great commercial enterprise in northern and western Europe, England had never gone to war, but to repel aggression, direct or circuitous. Concord being the mutual interest of the parties, Mr. Pitt conceived the noble design of changing the contentious system of policy which had so long prevailed; and the execution, though difficult, he had solid reasons not to believe impracticable. That hereditary enmity was not an unsurmountable obstacle to reconciliation and close alliance, was clearly demonstrated from the former and recent relations between France and Spain, and between France and Austria. Those powers, which had been the constant enemies of France throughout the seventeenth century, and one of them during more than one half of the eighteenth, were now her fastest friends; why might not permanent amity be established between Britain and her former rival? The most effectual means of inducing the two countries to pursue objects so conducive to their mutual benefit, he thought, would be a commercial intercourse, which should reciprocally increase the value of productive labour. The minister derived his knowledge and philosophy from the purest sources; he sought information, either particular or general, wherever it was to be found authentic and important; and was peculiarly happy in arranging details, and, from either masses or systems, selecting and applying what was best fitted for his purpose. Political econo-

Perceives that peace and amicable intercourse is the interest of countries.

Thinks past enmity not an unsurmountable bar to permanent reconciliation.

my and commercial science he learned from Smith: he agreed with that illustrious writer in his estimate of the reciprocal advantage that might accrue to industrious and skilful nations, from an unfettered trade, which should stimulate their respective efforts. Before he formed his scheme for promoting an intercourse between the two chief nations of the world, he made himself thoroughly acquainted with the state of facts, the actual productions, and the probable resources of the respective countries. The minister possessed that ability and skill in choosing coadjutors, which results from a thorough comprehension of characters, and a nice discernment of the appropriate talents and knowledge, dispositions and conduct peculiarly adapted to any specific end. For commercial information and science, especially the history and actual state of modern trade, no man exceeded lord Hawkesbury: from that able statesman he derived very important assistance in preparing his scheme. Greatly did he also profit by Mr. Eden, whose acuteness and conversancy with every subject of commerce and diplomatic experience, rendered him a most valuable auxiliary in digesting and composing the plan at home, and the ablest agent for negotiating and concluding an advantageous agreement with France. Eden accordingly repaired to Paris; where he conducted and completed the desired arrangement with the ministers of Lewis.

Seeks the best assistance, and employs the most skilful agents.

The treaty in question established reciprocal liberty of commerce between the two countries. The subjects of each power were to navigate and resort to the dominions of the other, without any disturbance or question, except for transgressing the laws. The prohibitory duties in each kingdom, by enhancing the price, had reciprocally discouraged the sale of their principal commodities; these were now modified to the satisfaction of both by a tariff. The wines of France, to be imported into England, were subjected to no higher duty than the productions of Portugal; the duties on brandies and various other articles were to be lowered in proportion; and the commodities of Britain were to be equally favoured in France. On the same basis of reciprocity were the articles respecting disputes between the mercantile, maritime, or other

Principle and details of the treaty.

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subjects of the two countries, and various details of civil, commercial, and political intercourse were to be adjusted. In whatever related to the lading and unlading of ships, the safety of merchandise, goods and effects, the succession to personal estates, as well as the protection of individuals, their personal liberty, and the administration of justice, the subjects of the two contracting parties were to enjoy in their respective dominions the same privileges, liberties, and rights, as the nation or nations most highly favoured by each. Should hereafter, through inadvertency or otherwise, any infractions or contraventions of the treaty be committed on either side, the friendship and good understanding should not immediately thereupon be interrupted; but this treaty should subsist in all its force, and proper remedies should be procured for removing the inconveniencies, as likewise for the reparation of injuries. If the subjects of either kingdom should be found guilty, they only should be punished and severely chastised. The relative commercial condition and resources, on which Mr. Pitt grounded his conclusions, he generalized into concise propositions. At first sight it appeared, that France had the advantage in the gift of soil and climate, and in the amount of her natural produce; while Britain was on her part confessedly superior in her manufactures and artificial productions. This was their relative condition, and was the precise ground on which he imagined that a valuable correspondence and connexion might be established. Having each her own distinct staples; each that which the other wanted, and no clashing in the grand outlines of their respective riches; they were like two great traders in different branches, and might enter into a traffic mutually beneficial. The respective princes reserved to themselves the right of revising this treaty after the term of twelve years, to propose and make such alterations as the times and circumstances should have rendered proper or necessary for the commercial interests of their subjects. This revision should be completed in the space of a year, after which the present treaty should be of no effect; but in that event the good harmony and friendly correspondence between the two nations should not suffer the least diminution.

In a treaty formed on the basis of reciprocal freedom of trade, the advantage to the contracting parties was, and necessarily must be, in the compound rates of their resources and skilful industry. At first sight, from the climate and soil of France, the balance of commercial benefit appeared in favour of that country, and so many politicians reasoned with much plausibility; but Mr. Pitt had profoundly considered the relative circumstances, and justly concluded that the French industry and skill was much more inferior to the British industry and skill, than the French soil and climate were superior to the British soil and climate; and thus, that greater benefit would accrue to this country from the freedom of trade: experience justified his conclusions.

1787. Meeting of parliament, and the king's speech.

The commercial treaty was the chief object which occupied the public attention when parliament met on the 23d of January 1787. The speech from the throne mentioned the tranquil state of Europe, and the friendly dispositions of foreign powers to this country. His majesty informed parliament, that a treaty of navigation and commerce had been concluded between this country and France, and recommended it to the consideration of the houses, under two heads; its tendency to encourage the industry and extension of commerce, and to promote such an amicable intercourse as would give additional permanence to the blessings of peace: these were also the objects which his majesty had in view in other treaties which he was negotiating. A convention was formed between Britain and Spain, respecting the cutting of logwood: he farther directed their attention to plans, which had been framed by his orders, for transporting to Botany Bay, in New Holland, a number of convicts, in order to remove the inconvenience which arose from the crouded state of the gaols in different parts of the kingdom: he trusted they would also devise regulations for simplifying the public accounts, in various branches of the revenue: he relied upon the uniform continuance of their exertions in pursuit of such objects, as might tend still farther to improve the national resources, and to promote and confirm the welfare and happiness of his people. In discussing the proposed answer to the speech, some general

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observations were made upon the treaty by Mr. Fox; but they produced no debate, as the minister and his friends reserved their reasonings until the consideration of the subject was properly before the house.

The treaty is submitted to parliament.

On the 4th of February the treaty was submitted to parliament. After the minister had explained and supported the object, spirit, and provisions of this treaty, numbers of the opposite side attacked it on a variety of grounds, as relative to commerce, revenue, the naval, and the political interests of Britain. The arguments derived from our manufactures were, they contended, founded on a presumption, that the French character would not admit of equal industry as the English: that opinion was asserted to be unjust: the treaty would facilitate and encourage that contraband trade, which it had been the professed object of Mr. Pitt's policy to suppress: the free access of French ships to the British shores, would be unquestionably by many employed to the purposes of smuggling, and thus the revenue would be greatly injured. By reducing the duties on French wines, we had conceded advantages to France, for which we did not receive an equivalent: we had farther interfered with the Methven treaty, and the interests of our natural ally, Portugal. Respecting the naval operation of the treaty, it was a substitution of a near for a remote market, and requiring short trips would not exercise, nor form nautical skill: but the political effects of the treaty were chiefly reprobated: one argument, often repeated, was founded upon an authority, to which many politicians would bow on the recurrence of precisely similar cases. Mr. Pitt, the elder, having found the country at war with France, had displayed the whole vigour of his genius in measures most fatally hostile to France; therefore it was unwise in any minister to cultivate friendship with France, and particularly wrong in the son of such a father. France was the natural enemy of England, and no sincerity could be expected in any professions of friendship, no stability in any contract: nations which bordered on each other, could never thoroughly agree, for this single reason, that they were neighbours: all history and experience, according to opposition, assured us of the fact. Mr. Fox in

Mr. Fox and his co-adjutors oppose the treaty.

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particular maintained, that France was the inveterate and unalterable enemy of Great Britain; no mutual interest could possibly eradicate what was deeply rooted in her constitution. The intercourse which this treaty would produce, must be extremely hurtful to the superior national character of England. Evil communication corrupts good manners. The nearer the two nations were drawn into contact, and the more successfully they were invited to mingle with each other, in the same proportion the remaining morals, principles, and vigour of the English national mind, would be enervated and corrupted. No commercial treaty formed between the two countries had ever been beneficial to this country: on the contrary, that which followed the peace of Utrecht would have been extremely injurious, and every mercantile connexion with France had been always injurious to England. In defence of the treaty it was maintained, that the comparative character of the English and French manufactures, and artificial productions, would render the free trade more beneficial to this country than to France, notwithstanding her soil, climate, and natural produce. We had agreed by this treaty to take from France, on small duties, the luxuries of her soil, which, however, the refinement of this country had converted into necessaries. The wines of France with all their high duties, already found their way to our tables; and was it then a serious injury to admit them on easier terms? The admission of them would not supplant the wines of Portugal or of Spain, but only a useless and pernicious manufacture in our own country. The diminution on brandy was also an eligible measure, and would have a material effect in preventing the contraband trade, in an article so much used. It had been objected, that no beneficial treaty would be formed between this country and France, because no such treaty had ever been formed, and because, on the contrary, a commercial intercourse with her had always been hurtful to England: this reasoning was completely fallacious; it deduced a similar conclusion from totally dissimilar premises. For a long series of years we had no commercial connexion with France, and the relative value of the respective productions were totally

France the unalterable enemy of Great Britain. Mutual interest can never eradicate that sentiment.

Every commercial connexion with France has been injurious to Britain.

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changed. When a treaty was proposed at the peace of Utrecht, England was extremely deficient in those manufactures in which she now excelled, and much inferior to France in produce; by a free trade she must then have been a great loser, because she would have given much more than she would have received: now she would be a great gainer, because she would receive much more than she gave. The present treaty did not in the smallest degree affect the stipulations with Portugal. The French wines would be still much dearer, notwithstanding the diminution of the duties. In a political view it certainly could be no argument against the adoption of a system of conduct in one species of circumstances, that a contrary system had been pursued with acknowledged wisdom in a different situation of affairs. Although Mr. Pitt the father had, when his country was at war with France, employed the most energetic and successful efforts to be victorious in war, that was no reason that Mr. Pitt the son should not endeavour equally to make the best of existing circumstances, by promoting commerce with the same country when at peace. The minister himself controverted Mr. Fox's position, that France was unalterably the enemy of the country. The existence of eternal enmity was totally inconsistent with the constitution of the human mind, the history of mankind, and the experience of political societies. Every state recorded in history had been at different times in friendship or amity with its several neighbours. The dissension between France and this country has arisen from mistaken ambition on her side; there was no more natural antipathy between an Englishman and a Frenchman, than between a Frenchman and a Spaniard, or a Frenchman and a German. France, after being long hostile to the house of Austria, had at last discovered, that it was much more advantageous for both parties to cultivate peace and harmony, than to impair their respective strength, and exhaust their resources. Hostilities had been carried on between France and Austria, without very long intervals of peace, for two centuries and a half. During the greater part of the seventeenth century, profound peace had subsisted between France and England; there was

Denied that there is any unalterable enmity between France and Britain.

nothing improbable in an idea that such a system might again prevail; but should war again arise, would the treaty deprive us of our natural watchfulness, or our accustomed strength? On the contrary, as it must enrich the nation, it would also prove the means of enabling her to combat her enemy with more powerful effect: but it was now much less likely that our resources should be called for such a purpose, than at former periods. If ever France and her allies could have expected to overwhelm England, their hopes might have been sanguine in the American war; they had united the whole maritime world to reduce her commerce and her navy, but they had totally failed in reducing our naval power, and sunk her finances to a situation of extreme embarrassment; hence, though it was always the interest of France to avoid war with Great Britain, her present circumstances rendered it more necessary than ever to abstain from hostilities, which, under her embarrassment, would expose her to inevitable bankruptcy. On the other hand, by cultivating a connexion with this country, she must perceive the means of recovering from her difficulties. From all these considerations, we might safely infer the sincerity of France; no doubt that country would gain by the treaty; the French would not yield advantages without the expectation of a return: unless the other party derived benefit from the agreement, we could have little hopes of its permanency; but Britain would reap much more advantage. France gained for her wines, and her productions, an extensive and opulent market; we did the same to a much greater degree: she procured a market of eight millions of people; we a market of twenty-four millions; France gained this market for her produce, which employed few hands in the preparation, gave small encouragement to navigation, and afforded little to the state; we gained this market for our manufactures, which employed many hundred thousand of our countrymen in collecting the materials from all corners of the world, advanced our maritime strength, and in every article and stage of its progress contributed largely to the state.

The repeated discomfiture of France, warring against the navy of England, at length taught her the policy of peace.

By the treaty both parties procure a more extensive market for their respective productions, than either could elsewhere.

The treaty underwent many and various discussions through its passage in both houses; and although there

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neither was, nor indeed could be, much novelty of argument, as it had been so fully canvassed, yet in both houses it called forward an exhibition of commercial knowledge and philosophy, superior to any that had ever appeared in the British, and consequently in any senate. In the house of commons several young members very eminently distinguished themselves, by speeches for and against the treaty, especially Mr. Grenville on the one side, Mr. Grey and Mr. Windham on the other. In the house of peers, though lord Thurlow, and lord Hawkesbury, lord Loughborough, and lord Carlisle, with other peers on both sides, exerted their respective abilities upon this subject, yet the fullest and most detailed reasonings were presented by the marquis of Lansdown, and the bishop of Landaff. The oration of the former nobleman, in some respects, coincided with the supporters, and in others with the opposers of the treaty. He with ministers contended on the sound policy of cultivating an amicable intercourse with France; and with the other side, that the reciprocity on which the treaty was said to be founded was merely ideal, and that Britain must greatly lose by the stipulation: these objections were weighty, if well grounded; nevertheless he declared his warm and cordial support of the treaty[c]. The bishop of Landaff, in his oration, manifested the same

c An altercation arose from the debate between the marquis and the duke of Richmond: the former had stated the danger of the fortifications of Cherburg, and, while on that subject, had digressed to make a severe animadversion on his grace's plan for fortifying Portsmouth and Plymouth. The duke observed, that the marquis's opinion declared orally and in writing, as witnesses and letters could prove, had, when himself minister, declared his perfect approbation of the plan, to reprobate which he had now deviated from the question. It appeared, however, in investigation, that the marquis had never expressly and explicitly either said or written, that he concurred with the duke of Richmond; his grace and Mr Pitt, and other hearers, had only inferred his sentiments from his words and conduct, but could not affirm that he had plainly and categorically said, that he approved of the plan. They thought that he had agreed to the plan, because he spoke of it very favourably when consulted on the subject He had, as first lord of the treasury, included a sum for the proposed fortifications in the estimates of expense for the year. His lordship, however, now declared, that he had always disapproved of the scheme, and challenged his grace to produce a scrap of writing to the contrary. Although, by this declaration, it would appear that those senators were mistaken in their construction of his words and actions, it must be allowed, that their interpretation was, according to the usual rules of reasoning, not very unnatural. The applicability, however, of a general criterion to the explanation of a particular case, must depend in a great degree on the peculiar qualities of the subject. The duke of Richmond went so far as to charge his lordship with insincerity; an allegation which the noble peer

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vigour of mind and industry of inquiry, which rendered him so eminent in chemistry and theology, and procured the applause of both parties. The treaty was approved by a great majority of both houses; and on the 8th of March an address was presented to both houses, testifying their joint approbation of the treaty with France.

The treaty is supported by a great majority.

THE convention with Spain, to which his majesty's speech had alluded, was of very secondary and subordinate moment, when compared with the treaty that we have been considering; nevertheless, it was by no means unimportant. The agreement in question was concluded the 14th of July[d] 1786, and chiefly regarded the privilege of cutting logwood. The British possessions on the Musquito shore were ceded in exchange for a tract of land on the Bay of Honduras. The contract produced little animadversion in the house of commons, but underwent severe strictures in the house of lords; the opponents of administration contended, that we certainly could have made a better bargain, than to have ceded to Spain a tract of land, at least as large as the whole kingdom of Portugal, which yielded us cotton, indigo, mahogany, and sugar, in exchange for a liberty to cut logwood, and a scanty settlement of twelve miles in extent: it was moreover ungrateful to the British subjects who resided there on the faith of our protection, and who had contributed every effort in their power to assist their country. Ministers replied, that the complaint respecting the value of the cession arose from geographical and statistical inaccuracy. The territory which we relinquished was much less extensive and productive, than lords in opposition apprehended. On the second subject of censure they asserted, that the number of British subjects settled there did not amount to one hundred and forty; and provision was made for the security of their persons and effects: these arguments being satisfactory to the majority of the house, they declared their approbation of the treaty.

reprobated with great indignation. In vindicating himself, the marquis of Lansdown asserted, that OPENNESS *was his characteristic*, and that it was solely from the consideration of the unguardedness of his temper, that, by the advice of his friends, he had secluded himself from the world.

d See State Papers.

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1787. Consolidation of the customs.

One of the subjects recommended to parliament by the speech from the throne, was the consolidation of the customs. The increasing commerce of this country on the one hand, and its accumulated burdens on the other, had so widely exceeded the expectation of our ancestors, and all the grounds of calculation on which they founded their system of finance, that the principles which they adopted, though sufficiently suited to the narrow and confined scale of our former exigencies and resources, were no longer applicable. The consequence of retaining the old principle, under the altered circumstances of the country, had been in several points of view very detrimental to the interests of the nation. The first institution of the subsisting duties of the customs was made by the statute of the twelfth year of king Charles II. under the names of tonnage and poundage; the first, an impost upon wines, measured by the quantity imported; and the second, on the price of all other articles. The last was therefore liable to great inaccuracies: it was not calculated according to the real value of the commodities, but by an arbitrary estimation; perhaps the market price of the article at the time of imposing the duty: this principle, when once adopted, was pursued in every fresh subsidy: in some instances it had operated, by imposing additional duties calculated at so much per cent. upon the duty already paid; in others it laid a farther impost of the same description on a particular denomination of the commodity; almost all the additional subsidies had been appropriated to some specific fund for the payment of certain annuities: there must, therefore, be a separate calculation for each made at the customhouse; and from the complexity of the whole system, it was scarcely possible that a merchant could be acquainted, by any calculations of his own, with the exact amount of what he was to pay. To remedy this great abuse, Mr. Pitt proposed to abolish all the duties that now subsisted in this confused and complex manner, and to substitute one single duty on each article, amounting, as nearly as possible, to the aggregate of the various subsidies now paid; only where a fraction was found in any of the sums, to change it for the nearest integral number, usually taking the higher rather

than the lower. This advance would produce an increase in the revenue to the amount of 20,000l. per annum, and lay upon the public a burden, which must be amply compensated by the relief which the merchants were to experience from the intended alteration. Mr. Pitt had given complete attention to this business; and had not left one person unconsulted from whom any information could be obtained; and the greatest diligence had been used to circulate the plan among the most competent judges of those persons who were immediately concerned in its operation and effects. The proposed scheme caused no debate; the object was so evidently adventageous, and the means so well adapted, as to command the concurrence and approbation of the whole house;[e] and a bill for the purpose was introduced and passed. On the 26th of April, Mr. Pitt presented to the house of commons a bill, stating, that notorious frauds had been committed in the collection of the tax on post horses, and providing that, as a remedy to the evil, the tax should be farmed. The several districts were to be put up to public auction at the present amount received in each, and at the highest rate which it ever had produced; and it was not doubted there would be many candidates; hence the full value might be expected. Mr. Fox opposed the bill, as tending to enlarge the number of collectors very considerably, and in the same proportion to increase the influence of the crown: it was, besides argued against the proposed mode of taxation, that it was repugnant to the principles of our constitution, and to the general system of our revenue; and was the mode adopted under arbitrary governments, and one of the principal sources af oppression in France: the precedent was in the highest degree alarming, and required to be warmly resisted in the outset. To these objections the minister and his friends replied, that although farmers of the revenue contributed, under arbitrary governments, very greatly to the miseries of the people, yet it was not from the nature

e Mr. Burke, who rose immediately after the minister, professed that it did not become him, or those who like him unfortunately felt it to be frequently their duty to oppose the measures of government, to content themselves with a sullen acquiescence; but on the contrary to rise manfully and do justice to the measure, and to return their thanks to its author, on behalf of themselves and their country. See parliamentary debates, 1787.

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of their employment, but from the system under which it was exercised. The powers to be given to the farmers were no greater than those at present intrusted to collectors: after considerable discussion, the bill passed both houses without a division.

Application of the dissenters for a repeal of the test act.

A SUBJECT was introduced into the house of commons, which became repeatedly the object of its consideration in succeeding sessions: this was a proposition for the repeal of the test and corporation acts. The dissenters from the church of England were very considerable, both in numbers and opulence; and certain classes of them derived great lustre from the learning and genius of their leaders. Among them there were not a few active, bold, and aspiring men; these very naturally wished to enjoy the sweets of power, to rise to a political superiority over those to whom they might fancy themselves intellectually superior. Among sectarians, the influence of their ministers is generally greater than under an establishment. The relation between the dissenting pastor and his flock is voluntary; whereas between a clergyman and parishioners it is created by the law of the land. The former has, from his situation, dependent on the liberality of his employers, the strongest motives of interest to accommodate himself to their passions, prejudices, and humours;[f] because, if he thwart these, the proceeds of his labours will be much diminished. The latter, being independent of the bounty of those whom the constitution of the country has delegated to his spiritual care, has no interested motive to gratify his parishioners, any farther than is consistent with wisdom and virtue. The sectarian minister, like a tradesman, depends for subsistence on his customers;[g] and the sure way of increasing the number of those is obsequiousness.[h] The beneficed clergyman, as a gentleman, may cultivate the good will of his people, and the friendship of the most deserving; but in paying his court need not stoop beneath a dignified equality. Sectarians also are infinitely more addicted to theological disputations, than members of an established church. The zealous agitators of controversy

f See Hume, vol. iii. p. 249. prefatory to the history of the reformation.
g Ibid. 251. h The reader will observe, that here I merely describe the general tendency of situation to influence conduct.

naturally regard with much veneration the chief professor of their tenets. From these causes, the influence of dissenting preachers over their employers was and must have been very great. It certainly then was very easy for them to render the people zealous and eager to procure privileges so gratifying to human passions, nor were they actually wanting in attempts to predispose the public in their favour. Many of their preachers were literary undertakers, who would write on any and every subject. Doctors Price, Priestley, and some others, furnished ideas, which, by the assistance of dilation, repetition, and prolixity, sent to the world numberless books and pamphlets on the severe policy of the British constitution, which, in its allotment of offices, had required certain standards of qualification and disposition to discharge the respective duties. There were circumstances which they conceived favourable to the attainment of their object. The dissenters had coincided with the majority of the established church, in supporting the minister of the crown and people against the leader of a confederacy; thence they inferred, that *gratitude* would induce him to support a cause, in the discussion of which he was to be one of the JUDGES; that Mr. Pitt was to be guided by private affection in deliberating on a question of public expediency. The minister was on terms of friendly intercourse with various dissenters, especially Mr. Beaufoy: this consideration, they apprehended, would have great weight in determining the part which he, as a LAWGIVER, was to act. Mr. Fox, from his general eagerness to diminish restraints, had often professed, and uniformly manifested, disapprobation of tests and subscriptions: it was not doubted he would be friendly to the project, the whole dissenting interest, supported by the leaders of the two parties, would, they trusted, produce the desired repeal.

Dissenters favourable to Mr. Pitt, and thence expect his support.

DELEGATES were appointed to arrange and conduct their plans; these did not directly petition parliament, but first published and dispersed a paper which they called "the case of the protestant dissenters, with reference to "the test and corporation acts."[i] This treatise exhibited

Previous steps to prepossess the public in their favour.

[i] See Domestic Literature in the New Annual Review for 1787.

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the history of the corporation and test acts; the hardships to which conscientious dissenters were exposed by those restrictory statutes; and endeavoured to demonstrate both the justice and expediency of affording them effectual relief. When this representation explained to the public their apprehension of the predicament in which they stood, the dissenters engaged Mr. Beaufoy to move, that the house should resolve itself into a committee to consider those acts. In introducing this subject, on the 28th of March, the senator in the first place, stated, what were the exceptionable provisions of the law; and in the next, the peculiar period and circumstances of its enactment. The test act required of every person accepting a civil office, or a commission in the army or navy, to take the sacrament within a limited time; and if, without qualifying himself, he continued to occupy any office, or hold any commission, he not only incurred a large pecuniary penalty, but was disabled thenceforth for ever from bringing any action in course of law; from prosecuting a suit in the courts of equity; from being the guardian of a child, or the executor of a deceased person, and receiving any legacy. On the second head, he recapitulated the history of the act, and the noted though despicable artifice by which Charles II. defeated its repeal.[k] He farther endeavoured to prove, that the dissenters had always been favourable to the present happy establishment, and that their general conduct had been such as to entitle them to the gratitude and regard of every true patriot. Lord North, who had been lately deprived of the organs of sight, and thereby prevented from regular and constant attendance in parliament, came that day forward to defend the church from apprehended encroachment. His lordship, educated at Oxford, and impressed with the sentiments which that university has uniformly inculcated, was a strenuous supporter of episcopal doctrines. Though too benevolent in disposition and mild in temper for bigotry, he was the warm friend of the rights and privileges of the ecclesiastical establishment, and had always opposed the dissenters when applying for a change. He now declared himself, though

Mr. Beaufoy pleads their cause in parliament.

Lord North, a moderate tory, opposes the application as inimical to the church.

k Hume, vol. vii.

attached to the church, the sincere friend of religious liberty. Far should he be from opposing the present motion, if it sought no more than the free and entire exercise of the rights of conscience; but it prayed for the repeal of an act, which was the great bulwark of the constitution, and to which we owed the inestimable blessings of freedom; and recommended a proceeding contrary to the happy experience of a century. It had been said, that the test act was an indignity to the dissenters: but had we not resolved, that no monarch should sit on the throne who refused to comply with the test? If the throne were offered to any prince, who, from motives of conscience, declined this condition, surely the refusal of the throne to that prince would be no indignity. There was no complaint of ecclesiastical tyranny; universal toleration was established; let them therefore guard against change in the church, nor confound the free exercise of religion with admissibility to civil and military appointments. Mr. Pitt supported the same side of the question; and began by marking the difference between civil and religious liberty on the one hand, and political trusts on the other. The former, every good constitution of government must secure to all its subjects; the latter was bestowed with discrimination, according to individual qualification and disposition, of which the community had the right of judging by any rule that it thought expedient. The test was merely the condition required by the employer from persons to whom he committed a trust. Every master had an unquestionable right to declare the conditions in which he would admit service; and none could be aggrieved by an exclusion arising from himself. The present, therefore, was not a question of grievance and redress, but simply of policy. On this question legislation had only one subject of deliberation, was it expedient, in the present circumstances, sentiments, and principles of the dissenters, for the nation to employ them in certain specified offices? To such an inquiry, every recapitulation of former history was extraneous: a repeal might have been wise in the time of Charles II., and unwise in the reign of George III. The dissenters were, undoubtedly, a body of men, who were entitled to the consideration of parliament; but there

Mr. Pitt opposes it on the grounds of political expediency.

The test no infringement of toleration; merely a condition.

Of admissibility to certain offices.

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was another class equally respectable, and more numerous, whose fears on this occasion would be alarmed. Many members of the church of England conceived, that the ecclesiastical part of our constitution would be seriously injured, and their apprehensions were not to be treated lightly. If he were arguing on principles of right, he should not talk of alarm; but he had already said, he was arguing upon principles of expediency. The church and state were united upon principles of expediency; and it concerned those, to whom the wellbeing of the state was intrusted, to take care that the church should not rashly be demolished. The persons who now applied, declared, that they meant nothing political by their application; but he must look at human actions to find out the springs.

Eminent dissenters avowed themselves hostile to the church.

Highly as he thought of many of the present dissenters, he could not but observe there were persons among them, who would not admit that any establishment was necessary, and against such it became the legislature to be upon their guard. Doctor Priestley, whose abilities and learning were very high, and whose opinions were received as oracles by a certain class of dissenters, had proclaimed enmity against the church. Sectarians (he said) were wisely placing as it were, grain by grain, a train of gunpowder, to which the match would one day be laid to blow up the fabric of error, which could never be again raised upon the same foundation. When he saw proceedings, intended to subvert so important a part of our polity, he thought circumspection and vigilance absolutely necessary: when there was an avowed design to sap the fortress, it became the duty of the garrison to secure the outposts: the dissenters already enjoyed every mental freedom to serve God, according to their consciences, in the most ample degree: what they now required, was inexpedient and dangerous. These sentiments deeply impressed the house; and on a division, the proposition of Mr. Beaufoy was negatived by a majority of one hundred and seventy-eight to one hundred.

Therefore not expedient to extend their power.

The application is rejected.

Soon after this application, a bill was introduced for granting indulgence to a different species of complainants; these were insolvent debtors. The vast increase of commerce poured opulence on the nation; but to many indivi-

duals, unavoidable losses or injudicious speculations, brought bankruptcy and ruin. Luxury, growing with commerce and riches, spread its influence over society; the immense fortunes that were acquired by extortion and peculation in the east, and during the American war, through the prodigal effusion of the public money, stockjobbing, and other causes, operated upon the minds of many traders, and inspired them with a desire of rapid accumulation. This spirit suggested various schemes, which being much more extensive than the capital that could be employed, failure produced certain ruin. Gaming of every kind was extremely prevalent: the example of some very eminent characters, combining with their winning and impressive manners, infected their intimate associates with this particular vice, and with general extravagance; and that consequence extended itself to many of their political supporters. The metropolis teemed with gambling tradesmen; these became strenuous politicians, who wished to have a share in directing the business of the nation, and that they might deliberate in the tavern, they neglected their shops; imitating those whom they admired, they followed them to their private pastimes; and closed their exertions in the king's bench or fleet prisons; and the number of imprisoned debtors, through either misfortune or vice was extremely great. There can be no wise and just reason for confining a debtor, but to compel payment: if there be no property concealed, confinement of the debtor cannot restore the creditor's right: were it practicable to compel, in every case, the debtor, to give up his effects to the creditor, as from effects, not person, his reimbursement must proceed, imprisonment[1] might appear no longer to an-

[1] Mr. Burke delivered the following opinion on this important subject, in his address to the electors of Bristol:—"There are two capital faults in our law, with relation to civil debts. One is, that every man is presumed solvent; a presumption, in innumerable cases, directly against truth; therefore the debtor is ordered, on a supposition of ability and fraud, to be coerced his liberty until he makes payment. By this means, in all cases of civil insolvency, without a pardon from his creditors, he is to be imprisoned for life; and thus a miserable mistaken invention of artificial science operates to change a civil into a criminal judgment, and to scourge misfortune or indiscretion with a punishment which the law does not inflict on very great crimes. The next fault is, that the inflicting of that punishment is not on the opinion of an equal and a public judge; but is referred to the arbitrary discretion of a private, nay interested and irritated, individual. He who formally is, and substantially ought to be, the judge, is in reality no more than ministerial, a mere executive instrument of a private man, who is at once judge and party: every idea of judicial order is sub-

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swer any just purpose to the creditor. The laws of imprisonment for debt were, by many of the most enlightened men, deemed a great blemish in the legislative code of the country. Cautious, however, not hastily to innovate, lawgivers, instead of changing the principle, had endeavoured to lessen the severity of the operation by temporary expedients. One of these was by insolvent acts, which have been usually passed at periods of various distance, when the prisons of the kingdom were so full, as to be supposed to render them absolutely necessary. The last of these had been passed in the year 1780, and bills of this kind had been repeatedly proposed, but negatived. This year a proposition to a similar effect was made in the house of lords; the chief supporters were lord Kinnaird, the earl of Hopetoun, the duke of Norfolk,[m] but above all lord Rawdon. This accomplished nobleman we have already seen[n] distinguished as a soldier; equally excelling in the arts of peace, he was now become eminent as a member of the senate. With his many other virtues, remarkable for humanity, he directed his attention to the alleviation of misery: his lordship supported the liberation of insolvent debtors, both on the ground of mercy and political expediency. Do not confine debtors (he said) to gratify the resentment of creditors! Do not, because one individual is malignant, suffer another to be miserable! By confining insolvent debtors, you prevent them from benefiting themselves, their families, and the community; and you deprive them of every possible means of indemnifying their creditors. Clauses may be introduced, which would relieve misfortune, without suffering fraud to escape. Lord Thurlow had been uniformly the chief opposer of the several insolvent bills, and now maintained the same ground. His arguments on the subject have been frequently imputed to a severe unmerciful disposition; but whether conclusive or not, when fairly canvassed, they

Bill for the relief of insolvent debtors.

Enlightened and liberal policy of Lord Rawdon.

verted by this procedure. If the insolvency be no crime, why is it punished with arbitrary imprisonment? If it be a crime, why is it delivered into private hands to pardon without discretion, or to punish without mercy and without measure."

m This nobleman, hitherto mentioned in the history as the earl of Surry, had, about a year before, succeeded to the dukedom by the death of his father. The present duke is the first protestant representative of the family.

n Vol. ii. *passim.*

discover no marks of such a spirit; they manifestly arise from a policy, suggested by an extensive view of a commercial country, and the means of encouraging industry and frugality, and restraining idleness and extravagance: whatever opinion we may form of his reasoning, these were evidently his objects. His lordship, to answer theoretical ingenuity, which expatiated on the miseries that a rigorous creditor might inflict on an innocent though unfortunate debtor, stated a simple and broad fact: English creditors, as a collective body, are distinguished for lenity; to support this assertion he appealed to observation and experience; and affirmed, that lawyers and judges, who, in the exercise of their professions, had the most frequent opportunities of knowing the treatment of debtors by creditors, were beyond all others the most deeply impressed with this truth. Lord Mansfield had observed, that for twenty prodigal debtors, there scarcely appeared in the course of law one cruel creditor; the law, as it now stood, discriminated between misfortune and vice: the bankrupt code was instituted for the relief of traders, who failed through unforeseen misfortunes; they were the proper objects of generosity and protection; while, on the other hand, those who ran in debt, knowing that they should never be able to pay, were certainly fit subjects of that severity, which the law, as it stood, empowered their creditors° to exercise; besides, in the last insolvent act, the preamble had declared, that it was not likely any more such acts should be passed; and thus in a great measure pledged the public faith to creditors: as he was inimical to the insolvent bill, he said he intended to propose several regulations for mitigating the miseries of imprisoned debtors. This bill was negatived, on a division, by a majority of twenty-three to twelve.

The bill is negatived.

A QUESTION was this session submitted to the house of lords concerning peers of the kingdom of Scotland who acquired British peerages. During the preceding summer, the earl of Abercorn, and the duke of Queensberry, of the kingdom of Scotland, had been called to the dignity of British peers, by the titles of viscount Hamilton, and

Inquiry about Scottish peerages.

° Lord Thurlow did not here overturn the objection to a system which makes the party both judge and punisher.

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baron Douglas; notwithstanding which, they continued to sit as representatives of the peerage of Scotland. Lord Stormont contended, that the right of representation was granted to Scottish peers as a recompense for the loss of an hereditary seat in parliament; those who no longer suffered the loss, could therefore no longer be entitled to a share in the compensation. Having recapitulated the history of the union to illustrate his positions, he moved, that the earl of Abercorn and the duke of Queensberry, who had been chosen in the number of the sixteen peers, having been created peers of Great Britain, thereby ceased to sit in that house as representatives of the peerage of Scotland. His lordship rested his principal argument on a resolution of the house of lords, which was passed in January 1709, that a peer of Scotland, sitting in the parliament of Great Britain, by virtue of a patent passed since the union had no right to vote in the election of the sixteen peers of Scotland. From this opinion of the house, declaring that such peers could not choose representatives, his lordship inferred, that they could not be representatives themselves. Lord Loughborough supported this constructive interpretation; lord Thurlow, on the contrary, maintained, that a resolution of either house did not constitute the law of the land; and that they ought to abide by that law, according to its literal meaning. Another debate soon after took place on a question, nearly connected with this, but to which the resolution of 1709 more directly applied: whether British peers, created since the union, could vote at the election of a Scottish representative: both sides were supported and opposed on the same grounds as in the foregoing case; and both motions were negatived.[p]

Magnanimous sacrifice by the prince of Wales of splendor to justice.

A SUBJECT equally interesting and important at this time attracted the public attention, and underwent a discussion in the house of commons. The prince of Wales, amiable, engaging, and accomplished, with a vigorous understanding, possessed strong affections, and was not without that disposition to pleasure which so often accom-

p At the election of the earl of Selkirk and lord Kinnaird, to represent the peerage of Scotland, in the room of the duke of Queensberry and the earl of Abercorn, the dukes of Queensberry and Gordon had given their votes as peers of Scotland.

panies the sensibility and animation of youth, especially in such rank and circumtances as easily afford the objects of pursuit and the means of attainment. Attached to the fair sex, the manly beauty of his face and person, apart from his other advantages, procured him, in the susceptible hearts of his countrywomen, incitements, which while it is admitted as a moral proposition that ascetic virtue ought to have resisted, it must be allowed as an historical fact, that such virtue is not very common in young men of twenty-four. Generous by disposition, the prince was munificent in bounty; social and elegant, he was sumptuous in hospitality: much connected with the chief characters of opposition, he partook of amusements, which constituted the favourite recreation of some of the most illustrious men of the party. The effect of so great an additional source of expenditure to his convivial splendor and expanded generosity, was, that his income did not prove sufficient, and that he had before summer 1786 incurred a very considerable debt. Finding himself in such circumstances, and desirous of rendering justice to his creditors, his highness resolved to suppress the establishment of his household and every useless expense, and to save from his income its greater portion, to be applied by trustees for the liquidation of his incumbrances. He had hitherto, like many other persons of rank and fortune, trained running horses for Newmarket, and the other places of public convention. His racers, his hunters, and even his coach-horses, were now sold by public auction. The buildings of Carleton house were stopped, and some of the principal rooms shut up from use: and the heir of the crown retired from the magnificence of his station to do justice to his creditors. This conduct in itself did the highest honour to the sentiments and rectitude of the prince; but a consideration totally irrelative, entered into the estimate which many formed of its merits. His highness had, in the several objects of his attachment, displayed a discriminating selection, which required the union of mental qualifications with corporeal graces. The lady who at this time occupied the principal share of his attention, was Mrs. Fitzherbert; a woman who, besides the charms and fascinations of beauty and accom-

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plishments, possessed a very respectable character: from this last circumstance a report originated, that greatly interested the public: one relation being presumed, was justified on the part of the lady by the presumption of another. It was currently reported, that the ceremony of marriage between Mrs. Fitzherbert and her lover had been privately performed; and as she was of the Roman catholic persuasion, that the officiating clergyman was a priest of her own religion. As a legal contract, no such marriage could have been concluded, according to the written statutes which regard the royal family; as a matter of fact, such a ceremony might have been performed, but the belief that it actually took place, was totally inconsistent with a just and candid estimation of the prince's character: it proceeded on one of two suppositions; either that he disregarded his own particular station, under its constitutional limits and prescriptions, and the recent laws enacted respecting the royal family, or that he had consented to an appearance which he well knew could not be valid; and thus practised deception on the other party. Improbable as the report was in its subject, and totally unsupported by any evidence, nevertheless it was very prevalent, and created considerable alarm. The prince's friends had expected an interference from a still higher quarter to extricate him from his pecuniary difficulties. Finding no measure of this kind in agitation, and from other incidents inferring disapprobation on the part of the father, many imputed the apprehended coldness to dissatisfaction with certain portions of the son's conduct, especially his close connexion with that party which opposed the ministers of his majesty's choice, who had been appointed under so very peculiar circumstances; and not a few attributed some share of the alleged displeasure to the abovementioned report. From July 1786 to April 1787, these topics continued greatly to engross the thoughts and conversation of the public; but had not been deemed fit subjects for parliamentary consideration. His highness now authorized Mr. Alderman Newnham to represent to the house of commons his embarrassed situation. On the 20th of April that gentleman opened the business: he previously asked Mr. Pitt if he=

had any design of bringing forward a motion for the relief of the prince; and being answered that he had received no commands from the king on the subject, the alderman gave notice, that, on the 24th of May, he should make a motion to that effect. This intimation excited much anxiety in the house, as it seemed to lead to such interesting discussions. Mr. Newnham, on one of the intervening days, explained the precise nature of his motion; which was to address the king, praying him to take into his consideration the derangement of the prince's affairs; and to grant him such relief as his wisdom should deem expedient and suitable; and pledging the house to make good the same. Mr. Pitt earnestly wished that the motion should not be brought forward: there were circumstances (he said) respecting the pecuniary concerns of the prince, that would render the present proposition inimical to the object of its author: the application ought to originate elsewhere, and not in the house: a correspondence had taken place between the party principally concerned, and another personage, respecting financial embarrassments. Mr. Pitt, with his usual closeness, kept to the subject which was introduced by Mr. Newnham; but some of the most zealous supporters of administration introduced an extraneous topic, in an allusion to the prevailing rumours. Messrs. Fox and Sheridan reprobated the report to which this insinuation referred; and, at the next meeting of the house, Mr. Fox declared he had authority from the prince to contradict the allegation. In law, as Mr. Fox observed, it could not take place; and in fact, Mr. Fox pledged the veracity of his highness that it had not taken place. This public disavowal, at the instance of the heir apparent, afforded very great satisfaction to the whole house. On recurring to his pecuniary situation, Mr. Fox declared, that the prince was willing to give a general and fair account of his debts; and if any part of it was doubted, he would present a clear explanation of the particulars to the king or his ministers. He had not the smallest objection to afford the house every possible satisfaction; and there was not a circumstance of his life which he was ashamed to have known.

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MEANWHILE, interviews took place between Mr. Dundas and his highness; and the following day between the minister and the prince. Mr. Newnham being made acquainted with the result, on the day on which the motion was intended to be made, declared it was no longer necessary. About a fortnight afterwards, a message from the king was delivered to parliament, stating, that his majesty with great concern acquainted them, that the prince had incurred a very large debt, which, if left to be discharged out of his annual income, would render it impossible for him to support an establishment that would be suited to his rank and station. His majesty was induced to the present application by his paternal affection to the prince of Wales; he could not, however, desire the assistance of parliament, but on a well grounded conviction that the prince would avoid contracting any debts in future. With a view to this object, the king had directed a sum of 10,000l. to be paid out of the civil list, in addition to his former allowance; he had the satisfaction to observe, that the prince had given the fullest assurance of his determination to confine his future expenses within his income, and had settled a plan, and fixed an order in his economy, which, it was trusted, would effectually secure the due execution of his intentions. He farther recommended to the commons to direct, that the works of Carleton house should be properly finished. In answer to this message, 161,000l. were voted for the payment of the prince's debts, and 20,000l. for the completion of his palace.

Proceedings respecting Mr. Hastings.

THE conduct of Mr. Hastings continued to occupy the attention of parliament, and produced an extraordinary display of abilities. One charge of great importance had been decided against the late governor general: the event of the accusation respecting Cheyt Sing, had surprised and alarmed Mr. Hastings and his friends. Many supporters of administration regarded the conduct of the accused in a very favourable light; thence his advocates seem to have inferred, that Mr. Pitt entertained a similar opinion. One of the most important qualities of a great minister is, that secresy which avoids the communication of sentiments or intentions, unless prudence admit or duty require that they should be manifested. This self com-

mand, the firm mind of Mr. Pitt possesses in a very high degree; and no artifice can discover what he resolves to conceal. In the present case he studied the charges separately, and, as became a judge, abstained from publishing his opinion, until he was prepared to deliver judgment. Mr. Hastings, therefore, saw that the vote of the prime minister would depend entirely on the view which he took of the respective charges; and that in cases comprehending probable grounds both of blame and justification, it might be doubtful what his sentence might be on some of the subsequent accusations. The authority, he was aware, of so highly prized talents and integrity would be great with those who, hesitating between contending probabilities, found a difficulty themselves in forming a decisive opinion. Much more anxiety and doubt now, therefore, displayed themselves in the friends of Mr. Hastings, than when major Scott, in the exultation of anticipated victory, had so eagerly invited Mr. Burke to the combat. The press teemed with defences of the late governor general; either the spontaneous effusions of conviction and friendship, or the purchased productions of literary ability: the former were more disinterested in the motive; the latter more successful in the execution. Some of Mr. Hastings's friends, indeed, very injudiciously, as well as uncandidly, ascribed bad or frivolous motives to the chief men on both sides of the house who voted for the impeachment. They asserted, that Mr. Burke was actuated by resentment; that Messrs. Fox, Sheridan, Windham, Adam, Anstruther, Grey, sir Gilbert Elliot, and other members of opposition, merely wished to gratify Burke, and to attack a man whom they thought favoured by the court and some of the ministers;[g] and that leading men of administration were moved by jealousy of Mr. Hastings's influence. Apprehending those advocates to be convinced, that the person whose cause they so warmly espoused was innocent, and also able to prove his innocence, the impartial reader must deem them extremely imprudent, and indeed unwise in resting his defence upon extraneous grounds.

Writings in his favour.

g See pamphlets in favour of Mr. Hastings *passim*; also periodical works, especially a newspaper called the World.

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This imputation was uncandid, because it assigned unjustifiable motives without proof, or even plausible argument. The motive ascribed to the principal accuser was virulent resentment, because a friend of his had been promoted by Hastings; but the alleged cause is not adequate to the effect. That Mr. Burke, or any man, would undertake so laborious a task, which required such minuteness of investigation concerning intricate details, the materials of which were to be fetched from such a distance, with so great and powerful a body inimical to an inquiry, merely because his friend had been slighted, is hardly within the compass of credibility: the same observations will apply to all the other prosecutors, as far as they were concerned. As to the jealousy of ministers, where can we find the grounds for such a passion in the relative situation of these and of Mr. Hastings? Fully admitting extraordinary talents and also meritorious conduct in the political saviour of India, can a reader discover any official situation which he was likely to fill, that could in the smallest degree interfere with the power and influence of the ministers in question? But the hired pleaders for Mr. Hastings, being much more accustomed to reasoning, defended him on stronger grounds. Instead of forming hypotheses concerning the *motives of the accusers*, they adduced arguments from the CONDUCT OF THE ACCUSED, which, in detailed series, principle and system, they justified by the circumstances in which he was placed, and illustrated by the effects that his exertions produced. These two classes of defenders had each considerable success; the first with the weak and undistinguishing; the second with men of discernment and abilities: and the majority of the nation was inimical to the impeachment.

The majority of the nation is adverse to the impeachment.

SUCH was the state of the public opinion, when one most powerful effort of eloquence diffused quite different sentiments through the kingdom; and presented Mr. Hastings as an atrocious criminal. This was the celebrated speech on the charge of the begums.

Eloquence gives a contrary turn to public opinion.

AN opinion long prevailed among literary men, that though Britons surpass the ancients in knowledge and philosophy; equal them in epic, and excel them in dramatic poetry; yet they are inferior in eloquence. Writers of

British eloquence.

transcendent talents, distinguished taste, and profound erudition, deem this notion so evident as not to require any discussion: they take the fact for granted, and confine their inquiries to the cause.[r] Great ingenuity is employed in comparing the fields of ancient and modern oratory, and discovering motives that led to much more powerful and impressive exertions among the Greeks and Romans, than any that influence British speakers: hence (say Hume and Blair) no Demosthenes or Cicero arises in a modern senate. A careful examiner of the eloquence which adorns the parliamentary history of the present reign, may probably doubt the truth of this assertion: he who peruses the orations of the elder or younger Pitt, Burke, or Fox, may hesitate before he will determine that they are surpassed by either Cicero or Demosthenes. It is, indeed, in the supreme excellencies of the Roman or Grecian orator, that they are most nearly equalled by British senators. Like Demosthenes,[s] especially, the highest of our orators are much less eminent for rhetorical flourishes, than for clear and forcible statement of important facts; combination of whatever illustrates the question, or promotes the measure proposed; comprehensive views of the situation, intentions, and interests of the parties concerned; energetic reasoning appropriated to the point at issue; and application of forcible motives to impel hearers to the counsels and conduct which the speaker desires. Eloquence, to be efficacious, must be adapted to the sentiments and knowledge of the persons to whom it is addressed; the same species and mode would not suit informed and enlightened gentlemen of the British house of commons, and the populace which constituted so great a part of the Grecian and Roman assemblies. The same genius and wisdom which enabled and directed Demosthenes to perform such intellectual wonders, empowered and guided him to adapt his oratory to the feelings and capacity of his audience: the acuteness and ingenuity of the Athenian meetings did not admit of much tinsel, instead of sterling

[r] See Hume's Essay on Eloquence; see also Blair's Lectures, lect. xxvi.; and *Man of the Moon*, by Dr. William Thompson.

[s] Of British orators Mr. Fox unquestionably bears the nearest resemblance to the Athenian in materials, spirit, and expression; and equals him in force and in fire, but is less attentive to luminous arrangement.

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value; nevertheless, they were in many respects a mere mob; consequently, there was sometimes room for substituting impression for conviction; addressing their feelings instead of their understandings; their weakness instead of their strength. Demosthenes, in order to carry the most beneficial plans into execution, was often obliged to soothe and cajole them; and for that purpose occasionally to admit into his discourses ornaments, which his own austere, strong, and chaste judgment would have induced him to reprobate. British eloquence is rather unlike to ancient in some of the subordinate instruments,[t] then unequal in the combination of strong reasoning, vivid imagery, and pathetic exhibition; which passing through the head affects the heart, and influences the conduct: the operation and result of oratory are no less vigorous and effectual in Britain, than in Rome or Athens. These observations though somewhat digressive, will not, I trust, be accounted foreign to the subject of our narrative, that now comes to a display of eloquence, which has, perhaps, never been surpassed in ancient or modern times.

On the 7th of February Mr. Sheridan opened the third article of accusation against Mr. Hastings; which was his conduct towards the begums,[u] or dowager princesses

t That, in point of action, ancient orators far surpass modern, is deemed one of those trifical observations, which it would be equally superfluous to illustrate, as absurd to controvert; a common inference from the allowed superiority of action is greater excellence of oratory; and the noted saying of the Roman is often quoted to prove, that gesticulation is the primary constituent of eloquence. One of the wisest men that has written on that or any other subject, views the importance of action in a different light "It is (says Dr. Johnson) a complaint which has been made from time to time, and which seems to have lately become more frequent, that *English* oratory, however forcible in argument, or elegant in expression, is deficient and inefficacious, because our speakers want the grace and energy of action. Among the numerous projectors who are desirous to refine our manners, and improve our faculties, some are willing to supply the deficiency of our speakers: we have had more than one exhortation to study the neglected art of moving the passions; and have been encouraged to believe, that our tongues, however feeble in themselves, may, *by the help of our hands and legs* obtain an incontrovertible dominion over the most stubborn audience, animate the insensible, engage the careless, force tears from the obdurate, and money from the avaricious. If, by slight of hand, or nimbleness of foot, all these wonders can be performed, he that shall neglect to attain the free use of his limbs, may be justly censured as criminally lazy: but we are afraid that no specimen of such effects will easily be shown. If we could once find a speaker in 'Change-Alley, raising the price of stocks by the power of persuasive gestures, we should very zealously recommend the study of his art; but having never seen any action by which language was much assisted, we have been hitherto inclined to doubt whether our countrymen are not blamed too hastily for their calm and motionless utterance." Idler, No. 90.

u See vol. ii. of this history, chap. xxix.

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Speech of Mr. Sheridan on the conduct of Mr. Hastings towards the begums.

of Oude. The introduction attacked a ground of defence chosen by many advocates of Mr. Hastings, that the successful result of his administration, amounted to a sufficient justification of his conduct: this principle the speaker reprobated, as contrary to every rule of natural and christian morals, which both taught, in the most unequivocal language, that wicked means were not to be employed for the purpose of accomplishing desirable ends; it was, moreover, a new and base sophism in the maxims of judicial inquiry, that crimes might be compounded, and that fortunate events were a full and complete set-off against oppression, corruption, breach of faith, peculation, and treachery. The conduct of the house of commons, during the preceding year, was guided by the soundest principles of jurisprudence; they had asserted, that there were acts of moral turpitude, which no political necessity could warrant; and proved to the world, that, however degenerate an example some of the British subjects had exhibited in India, the people of England, collectively, speaking and acting by their representatives, felt, as men should feel on such an occasion: they had demonstrated themselves superior to the presumptuous pretensions that were advanced in favour of this pillar of India, this corner stone of our strength in the East, this talisman of the British territories in Asia, whose character was said to be above censure, and whose conduct was not within the reach of suspicion. After this conciliatory exordium, the orator proceeded to rouse the attention of his hearers, by a concise but striking outline of the nature and magnitude of the subject, which he was about to submit to their consideration. The present charge he stated to be replete with criminality of the blackest die, tyranny the most vile and premeditated, corruption the most open and shameless, oppression the most severe and grinding, and cruelty the most hard and unparalleled. He professed to God, that he felt in his own bosom the strongest personal conviction on the present subject. It was upon that conviction that he believed the conduct of Mr. Hastings, in regard to the nabob of Oude, and to the begums, comprehended in it every species of human offence. He had proved himself guilty of rapacity, at once violent and

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insatiable; of treachery, cool and premeditated; of oppression, useless and unprovoked; of breach of faith, unwarranted and base; of cruelty unmanly and unmerciful! These were the crimes of which his soul and conscience arraigned Mr. Hastings, and which he trusted he should demonstrate to the satisfaction of every hearer. He was far from meaning to rest the charges upon assertion, or upon the warm expressions which the impulse of wounded feelings might produce: he would establish every part of the accusation by the most unanswerable proof, and the most unquestionable evidence. He would support every fact by a testimony, which few would venture to contradict, that of Mr. Hastings himself. As there were persons ready to stand up advocates for the late governor general, he challenged these to watch every particle of the accusations which he should advance: he desired credit for no fact which he did not prove beyond the possibility of refutation.

Mr. Hastings had endeavoured to establish, that the treasures of the begums were not private property, but belonged to the nabob; that the real proprietor had a right to reclaim his own property, whenever he chose; and actually had resumed it for the purpose of liquidating his debts to the East India company. To controvert this assertion he quoted the mahommedan law, and decisions upon that law concerning this very case; the amount was, that women, on the death of their husbands, are entitled only to the property within the zenana or harem where they lived. This opinion had been fully admitted by the council of Calcutta; the begums retained only the treasures which were within the harems, and relinquished every other property to the reigning prince. The British government of India at the time admitted, and even guaranteed the tenure by which the begums held this residue of effects; that property, therefore, was their own, and not the nabob's; it might be plundered, but could not be justly reclaimed. Mr. Hastings, in mitigation of his own severities, mistated the principles of mahommedan law, as if he meant to insinuate, that there was something in the eastern codes which rendered it impious in a son not to plunder his mother. From these arguments, to

establish that the property was the right of the begums, and consequently the seizure a violation of rights, the orator proceeded to the reasons which had been adduced for appropriating the treasures of the princesses: here, he rested his inference on the report of the governor general himself. The begums had at all times given disturbance to the nabob; they had long manifested a spirit hostile to his and to the English government; they had excited the zemindars to revolt; and they were accessary to the insurrection at Benares. Each of these allegations was sufficiently disproved by Mr. Hastings himself; who made it appear, that on the contrary they had particularly distinguished themselves by their friendship with the English, and by the various good offices which they rendered to the government. Mr. Hastings left Calcutta in 1781, and proceeded to Lucknow, as he said himself, with two great objects in his mind, Benares and Oude. What was the nature of these boasted resources? They resembled the equitable alternative of a highwayman, who, in going forth in the evening, was held in suspense which of his resources to prefer, Bagshot or Hounslow. In such a state of generous irresolution did Mr. Hastings proceed to Benares and Oude: at Benares he failed in his pecuniary object; then and not till then, not on account of any ancient enmities shown by the begums; not in resentment for any old disturbances; but because he had failed in one place, and had but two in prospect, did he conceive the base expedient of plundering these aged women. To carry his scheme into execution, Mr. Hastings, said his eloquent accuser, formed the atrocious design of instigating a son against his mother, of sacrificing female dignity and distress to parricide and plunder. At Chunar was that infamous treaty concerted; in which, among other articles, Mr. Hastings had stipulated with one whom he called an independent prince, that, as great distress had arisen to the nabob's government from the military power and dominion assumed by the dowager princesses he be permitted to reassume such of their lands as he may deem to be necessary. From the plan, the accuser proceeded to the execution; no sooner was this foundation of inquiry

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established, in violation of the pledged faith and solemn guarantee of the British government: no sooner had Mr. Hastings determined to invade the substance of equity, than he resolved to avail himself of judicial forms; and accordingly despatched a messenger for the chief justice of India, to assist him in perpetrating the violations he had projected. Sir Elijah Impey being arrived, Mr. Hastings, with much art, proposed a question of opinion, involving an unsubstantiated fact, in order to obtain a surreptitious approbation of the measure he had predetermined to adopt;—the begums being in mutual rebellion, might not the nabob confiscate their property? "Most undoubtedly!" was the ready answer of the friendly judge. Not a syllable of inquiry intervened as to the existence of the imputed revolt; not a moment's pause as to the ill purposes, to which the decision of the chief justice might be perverted. It was not the office of a friend to mix the grave caution and cold circumspection of a judge, with an opinion taken in such circumstances; and sir Elijah had previously declared, that he gave his advice, not as a judge, but as a friend; a character which he equally preferred in the strange office that he undertook, of collecting justificatory affidavits on the subject of Benares. It is (said the orator) curious to reflect on the whole of sir Elijah's circuit at that perilous time: he stated his desire of relaxing from the fatigues of office, and unbending his mind in a party of health and pleasure; yet, wisely apprehending, that too sudden relaxation might defeat his object, he contrived to mix some concerns of business with his amusements. In his little airing of nine hundred miles, great part of which he travelled post, escorted by an army, he selected those very situations where insurrection subsisted, and rebellion was threatened; and had not only delivered his deep and curious researches into the laws of nations and treaties, in the capacity of the oriental Grotius, whom Mr. Hastings was to study, but also appeared in the humbler and more practical situation of a collector of *ex parte* evidence: in the former quality his opinion was the premature sanction for plundering the begums; in the latter character he became the posthumous supporter of the ex-

pulsion and pillage of the rajah Cheyt Sing. Acting on an unproved fact, on a position as ideal as a *datum* of the duke of Richmond, he did not hesitate, in the first instance, to lend his authority to an unlimited persecution; in the latter, he did not disdain to scud about India, like an itinerant informer, with a pedlar's pack of garbled evidence and surreptitious affidavits. With a generous oblivion of duty and honour, with a proud sense of having authorized all future rapacity, and sanctioned all past oppression, this friendly judge proceeded on his circuit, of health and ease: while the governor general issued his orders to plunder the begums of their treasure, sir Elijah pursued his progress, and explored a country, that presented a speaking picture of hunger and nakedness, in quest of objects best suited to his feelings; in anxious search of calamities most akin to his invalid imagination: thus, at the same moment that the sword of government was turned to an assassin's dagger, the pure ermine of justice was stained and soiled with the basest contamination. Such were the circumstances, under which Mr. Hastings completed the treaty of Chunar; a treaty which may challenge all the treaties that ever existed, for containing in the smallest compass the most extensive treachery. An apology adduced by Mr. Hastings for his conduct is, that the begums resisted the resumption of the jaghires: the amount of this charge is, that these poor old women attempted to prevent robbery. Could any thing be more absurd, than to accuse persons of endeavouring to preserve their property from plunder? But the fact is, they made no resistance; they well knew that their feeble efforts could not restrain the force of the plunderer: but, Mr. Hastings farther added, the begums complained that they had suffered injustice. "God of "Heaven! had they not a right to complain? After the "violation of a solemn treaty, plundered of their property, "and on the eve of the last extremity of misery, were "they to be deprived of the ultimate resource of impotent wretchedness, lamentation and regret? Was it a "crime that they should crowd together in fluttering trepidation, like a flock of helpless birds, on seeing the felon kite, who, having darted at one devoted victim

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" and missed his aim, singled out a new object, and was " springing on his prey with redoubled vigour in his wing, " and keener vengeance in his eye?" After the eloquence of Sheridan had exhibited such a view of the acts of the accused, he proceeded to his general character. " It has " (he said) been advanced by admirers of Mr. Hastings, " who are not so implicit as to give unqualified applause " to his crimes, that they found an apology for their " atrocity in the greatness of his mind. To estimate the " solidity of such a defence, it is sufficient to consider " wherein this prepossessing distinction, this captivating " characteristic consists: is it not solely to be traced in " great actions directed to great ends? In them only are " we to search for true magnanimity; to them only can " we affix the splendor and the honours of true greatness. " There is, indeed, another species of greatness, which " displays itself in boldly conceiving a bad measure, and " undauntedly pursuing it to its accomplishment. Had " Mr. Hastings the merit of exhibiting either of these? " There was nothing great, nothing magnanimous, no- " thing open, nothing direct, in his measures or his mind: " on the contrary, he pursued the worst objects by the " worst means; his course was an eternal deviation from " rectitude: at one time he tyrannized over the will, and " at another time deluded the understanding; he was by " turns a Dionysius and a Scapin; as well might the " writhing obliquity of the serpent be compared to the " direct path of the arrow, as the duplicity of Mr. Hast- " ings's ambition to the simple steadiness of genuine " magnanimity; in his mind all was shuffling, ambigu- " ous, dark, insidious, and little; nothing simple, nothing " unmixed; all affected plainness and actual dissimula- " tion: he was an heterogeneous mass of contradictory " qualities, with nothing great but his crimes, and those " contrasted by the littleness of his motives; which at once " denoted his profligacy and his meanness, and marked " him for a traitor and a juggler: in his very style of " writing there was the same mixture of vicious contra- " rieties; the most groveling ideas he conveyed in the " most inflated language; giving mock consequence to " low cavils, and uttering quibbles in heroics; so that his

" compositions disgust the taste of the understanding, as " much as his actions excite the abhorrence of the soul. The " same character pervaded every department of his go- " vernment; alike in the military and the political line, we " may observe auctioneering ambassadors, and trading " generals: we saw a revolution brought about by an affi- " davit; an army employed in executing an arrest; a town " besieged on a note of hand; and a prince dethroned for " the balance of an account. Thus a government was " exhibited, uniting the mock majesty of a bloody sceptre, " and the little traffic of a merchant's counting house; " wielding a truncheon with one hand, and picking a " pocket with the other." This energetic, grand, and splendid display of eloquence was closed by the following peroration. " Factions exist in this house, and there is " scarcely a subject on which we are not broken and di- " vided into sects; habits, connexions, parties, all lead to " diversity of opinion; but when inhumanity presents " itself to our observation, it finds no division in the re- " presentatives of the British people; we attack it as our " common enemy; and conceiving that the character of " the country is involved, in our zeal for the destruction " of cruelty, we quit not our undertaking till it be com- " pletely overthrown. It is not to allowed to this as- " sembly to behold the objects of our compassion and bene- " volence in the present extensive inquiry: we cannot " contemplate the workings of their hearts, the quivering " lips, the trickling tears, the loud yet tremulous joys of " the millions, whom our vote of this night will for ever " save from the cruelty of corrupted power: but, though " we cannot directly see the effect, is not the true enjoy- " ment of our benevolence increased, by its being confer- " red unseen? Will not the omnipotence of Britain be " demonstrated to the wonder of nations, by stretching " its mighty arm across the deep, and saving by its fiat " distant millions from destruction? And will the bless- " ings of the people dissipate in the empty air? No. If " I may dare use the figure, they will constitute heaven itself " their proxy, to receive for them the blessings of their " pious thanksgiving, and the prayers their gratitude will " dictate!"

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SUCH is the outline and chief substance of this celebrated speech, whose delivery occupied the extraordinary length of five hours and a half; during which its excellence was uniform in vivid, animated, and fervid description of conduct, that excited the various emotions of the human heart[x] for the alleged sufferers, and against the alleged tyrant: filled the hearers with contempt and scorn against exhibited meanness, detestation of represented atrocity, and called their vengeance upon powerful guilt overwhelming helpless innocence. Never was Mr. Sheridan surpassed by any orator in brilliant and irresistible eloquence, nor has he often been equalled in ingenuity and acuteness of deduction from the premises which he assumed. If the governor general had acted in the mode, and from the motives represented with so impressive effect by Mr. Sheridan, he would have certainly deserved to have been ranked among all the Caligulas, Neros, and Caracallas, that had ever scourged humanity by lawless power; with all the Jonathan Wilds and Scapins, that by fraud and imposture supplied the want of force to perpetrate villany. The speech so manifestly astonished the house, that Mr. Pitt proposed to adjourn their meeting without coming to a deliberation until they should be sufficiently recovered to distinguish the blaze of eloquence from the light of truth: throughout the country the impression was little less powerful; and great numbers conceived Hastings as guilty as he was represented by transcendent genius. To the commons there appeared so probable grounds of accusation, as to produce a vote of one hundred and seventy-five to sixty-eight, for impeaching Mr. Hastings upon the third charge: several other inferior charges were voted to contain grounds of impeachment. On the 2d of April various other accusations were examined, and the impeach-

Its effects on the house of commons and the public.

x The late Mr. Logan, well known for his literary efforts, and author of a most masterly defence of Mr. Hastings, went that day to the house of commons, prepossessed for the accused and against his accuser. At the expiration of the first hour he said to a friend, "All this is declamatory assertion without proof:" when the second was finished; "This is a most wonderful oration:" at the close of the third; "Mr. Hastings has acted very unjustifiably:" the fourth; "Mr. Hastings is a most atrocious criminal:" and at last; "Of all monsters of iniquity the most enormous is Warren Hastings!" This I was told by Mr. Peter Stewart proprietor of the Oracle, who was present.

ment was at length voted; when the form in which that inquest should be carried on, became a subject of consideration. Mr. Fox proposed, that there should be a general charge of impeachment, and that the house, on acquainting the lords with their intention, should inform them that they were preparing articles which they would present with all convenient despatch; reserving to themselves the constitutional rights of supplying more heads, after they had gone through the whole. Mr. Pitt proposed they should separate and analyze the charges, since the accusation consisted of a diffuse and complicated mass; of many allegations which had not been substantiated, and of many facts which could not be considered as criminal; that thus each part should be tried by its distinct and individual merits. Mr. Burke and Mr. Sheridan coincided with the minister; and his plan was adopted. Mr. Hastings now made, through major Scott, an application to the house, that if they resolved there was ground for impeachment, they would vote that he should be brought to trial: he trusted that the house of commons would not suffer his name to be branded upon their records, without allowing him at the same time the only legal means of effacing the stigma.

A COMMITTEE was formed to prepare articles of impeachment against Warren Hastings, esq. and empowered to send for persons, papers, and records. The committee consisted of Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Pelham, sir James Erskine, Mr. Windham, Mr. St. John, Mr. Francis, sir Gilbert Elliot, sir Grey Cooper, Mr. Frederic Montague, Mr. Wellbore Ellis, general Burgoyne, colonel North, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Grey, Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Adam, Mr. Dudley Long, and lord Maitland.

The commons impeach Warren Hastings at the bar of the house of peers.

ON the 20th of May, Mr. Edmund Burke went in the name of the house of commons, and of all the commons of Great Britain, to the bar of the house of lords, and impeached Mr. Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors; and acquainted the lords, that the commons would, with all convenient speed, exhibit articles against him, and make good the same. The articles were eight in number: the charge of Cheyt Sing, the begums, charges of Farruckahad, the contracts, Fizulla Khan, the presents, the

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revenues, and misdemeanors in Oude. At the instance of Mr. Burke, Mr. Hastings was taken into custody by the sergeant at arms; and being immediately conducted to the bar of the house of lords, was delivered to the gentleman usher of the black rod. Upon the motion of the lord chancellor he was admitted to bail, himself in 20,000l. and two sureties, Mr. Sullivan, and Mr. Sumner, in 10,000l. each, and was ordered to deliver in an answer to the articles of impeachment in one month from that time, or upon the second day of the next session of parliament.[y]

Supplies.

Favourable state of the finances.

On the 20th of April the financial accounts and arrangements of the year were brought forward. The minister opened the subject, by testifying the high satisfaction that he felt, and which he doubted not the house would share, when he laid before them such an account of our finances, as would justify his former statements, reasonings, and predictions. The public services were to be provided for without additional imposts, although a very bad season in the West Indies had caused a defalcation in the customs to the amount of 350,000l.

Mr. Dundas brings forward the financial state of British India.

On the 7th of May, Mr. Dundas, as president of the board of control, brought forward the financial state of British India. He conceived it (he said) highly improper that any part of the empire should be in the receipt of a revenue of five millions, and maintain an army of seventy or eighty thousand men, without its being known to the house of commons how that revenue was disbursed, and why such an establishment was supported. The debt in India amounted to nine millions, the revenue of the last year afforded a surplus of 1,800,000l., and the company would be able to discharge their debt in this country in the year 1790. Having clearly and concisely stated these facts and opinions, Mr. Dundas moved resolutions respecting the revenues of India; these were carried without a division.

On the 30th of May his majesty prorogued parliament with a speech, expressing his entire approbation of the zeal and assiduity with which the houses applied themselves to the important objects recommended to their

[y] See Annual Register for 1787; British and foreign history, p. 148.

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attention at the commencement of the session, and returning his majesty's particular thanks for the proofs which they had given of affection for his person, family, and government. Satisfied as he was with the assurances which he received of the continuance, among foreign powers, of general tranquillity, he greatly regretted the internal dissensions among the states of the united provinces. He rejoiced at the progress made in the reduction of the national debt; and at the measures adopted by parliament for carrying into effect the commercial treaty with France, and for simplifying the revenue; he trusted the same patriotic dispositions would be exerted in their several counties, in promoting industry and good order; the surest sources of private and public prosperity.

Promising aspect of affairs.

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Affairs of Holland.—Ruinous effects of the war with Britain.—Complaints against the stadtholder.—Charge concerning the inaction of the fleets.—Objects of the aristocratic party at the end of the war.—They put arms into the hands of the multitude.—Effects of this measure.—Beginning of a democratic party.—Both the aristocratic and democratic parties agree in hostility to the house of Orange.—Advantages which they possessed over the stadtholderian party.—They are supported by the moneyed men—and sectaries.—Circumstances favourable to the prince.—He is commander of the army and fleet.—Civil power and authority.—He is governor general of the East and West India companies.—His hereditary possessions.—Several provinces favourable to his cause.—Friendship and affinity with Prussia.—Adverse faction trusts to the protection of France.—They deprive the prince of the command of the Hague.—The Orange family leave the Hague.—Temperate remonstrances of Prussia—disregarded by the faction,—who absolve the troops from their oath of fidelity.—Meeting of the states of Holland and West Friezeland,—violence of.—Remonstrance of the prince.—Frederic William sends his prime minister as ambassador to the states of Holland.—Firm memorial of.—Conduct of France—encourages the faction.—Rebellion commences at Hattem.—The insurgents are defeated.—Conciliatory interposition of Prussia—and of Britain—unavailing.—Joint mediation of Prussia and France.—Different views of these powers.—Alarming power of the democratic party—is exerted in levelling innovation—defeated in an attempt to suspend the office of stadtholder.—They try a new fabrication of votes.—The armed burghers are employed as instruments of revolution.—Fury of a revolutionary mob.—The states general avow themselves supporters of the constitution.—Disorders at Am-

sterdam.—The army continues attached to the prince.—The faction becomes desperate.—Arrest of the princess on her way to the Hague.—She is compelled to return.—On this insult the king of Prussia changes his tone.—He demands satisfaction of the states of Holland—which is not granted.—He determines on force.—The revolutionists rely on France.—The duke of Brunswick enters the United Provinces at the head of an army.—The revolutionists apply to France for aid.—Conduct of Britain.—The king of France intimates an intention of assisting the states of Holland.—Our king declares he will forcibly oppose such interference,—and prepares an armament.—France relinquishes her design.—and the duke of Brunswick is completely victorious.—Restoration of the stadtholder.—Great and unanimous praises of the British cabinet.

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Affairs of Holland.

THE most important events of the summer regarded the United Provinces. Their unfortunate war with Britain, and its ruinous consequences, had shaken the republic to its foundation, occasioned a departure from many of its ancient maxims and principles; and not only strengthened the old party which was friendly to France, but made way for the rise of a new faction, much more dangerous and destructive. The known averseness of the stadtholder to connexion with the house of Bourbon and the American colonies, his near relation and believed attachment to the British sovereign, afforded grounds for suspicion, that he could not engage very heartily in a cause so directly opposite to opinions in which he had been nurtered. The disgraceful and ruinous consequences of the war, the immense losses sustained by the capture of St. Eustatius, with other severe blows, as well on the seas as in both the Indies, which the republic had received during that ill sought and unfortunate conflict, not only disappointed the views of the supporters of the French interest, but produced great discontent among many other individuals, who did not originally belong to that party; and they imputed to the backwardness of the stadtholder, losses which proceeded from their own folly in courting a war with England. They commenced hos-

Ruinous effects of the war with Britain.

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tilities unwisely and unjustly, when they had so much va luable merchandise, either on sea or in their factories, ex posed to an enemy, who, notwithstanding every opposi tion, still retained the command of the ocean; and wer enraged that the stadtholder did not perform impossibili ties by saving them from the consequences of their iniqui tous impolicy. The charges against the stadtholder wer chiefly general: it was said, that he had not exerted th force with which he was intrusted by the state, in the manner, or with that energy which he might have employ ed, and which would have been most effectual for coun teracting the designs and frustrating the efforts of th enemy. On these points, the prince in vain repeatedl challenged his adversaries to the inquiry and proof; bu aware of the futility of their charges, they did not wis for investigation. One specific object of examinatio was, why the Dutch fleet did not proceed to Brest, a cording to compact, in the year 1782, that the whole com bined naval force of the house of Bourbon and Hollan might have descended at once on the coasts of Britai The failure had been loudly attributed to criminal neglec if not treachery; and a committee was speedily appoin ed to inquire into the causes: the result was, no disc very was made, tending in the smallest degree to affect th stadtholder.

Complaints against the stadtholder.

Charge concerning the inaction of the fleet.

At the termination of the American war, no ide of democratic liberty, or of the admission of the whol people into a share of the government, appear to have be entertained by the party in opposition to the stadtholde their design was to strengthen the aristocracies, and place the government in the hands of an oligarchy, cor posed of their own principal leaders, who would likewis be self elected and perpetual; and who, not subject to t jealousy attendant on the sway of a single person, in t nature of things would soon assume a decisive authorit which had never been possessed by the stadtholders. The contest with the emperor afforded a pretext for measure, which the aristocratic faction intended f strengthening their power, but eventually produced th total dissolution of their authority; this was, the bestow al of arms on the multitude: the people finding arms

Objects of the aristocratic party at the end of the war.

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their hands, began at once to feel their own importance; they awakened, as it were, from a dead sleep, and wondered why they held no share in that government which they were called upon to defend or support, and which it was evident without them could have no permanent security. The examples of Ireland and America were fresh before them; the very term of volunteers, which they assumed, contributed to stamp the character of the part they were to act. The democratic spirit being thus suddenly brought to life, felt the possession of its faculties, and displayed all the vigour, and, perhaps, even the wantonness of youth. The armed burghers had been designed as a counterpoise to the army, which was known to be generally attached to the stadtholder; and it was fondly expected, that when they had performed the service, they would have silently sunk into their former insignificance; but without waiting for that issue, they began to account themselves constituent members of the commonwealth, and demanded to be admitted to a share in the legislation and government of their respective cities, by electing delegates, who were to be received as their legal representatives in the public assemblies, and thus form a popular counterpoise to the aristocratic power. When these sentiments were avowed, nothing could exceed the surprise and consternation which they excited. The principal leaders of the faction were disconcerted and alarmed; they had improvidently raised a dangerous spirit, and brought a new power into action, without a due consideration of the force and eccentricity of its movements; and these were evidently beyond their control or management. This new body they saw would prove equally inimical to the aristocratical, as to the stadtholderian authority; but afraid, if they should then oppose the pretensions of the democratical party, that a powerful body would go over to the Orange adherents, and both united put an end to the sway of the nobles, they temporised, and appeared to coincide with the plebeian combination.

They put arms into the hands of the multitude.

Effects of this measure.

Beginning of a democratic party.

This union of two parties, of adverse interests, but concurring in desire to humiliate the stadtholder, was very formidable to that prince and his friends. The states of Holland and West Friezeland were the great and constant

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impugners of the stadtholder's authority and prerogatives. They assumed a superiority which was not admitted by the constitution of the union, and was derived only from the circumstance of Holland possessing a greater share of wealth, and a larger extent of territory, than any of the others. The most bitter animosity which appeared against the prince, seemed to be peculiarly lodged in that province; and the city of Amsterdam took the lead of all other places in the invariable display of enmity. The adverse faction had many and great advantages over the Orange party in this contest: for several years they pursued one common object, to which all their measures were directed; thence they were closely united: while their antagonists having no purpose to attain, which might serve to combine their zeal or excite their enterprise, were loose, careless, and unconnected. The opposite party had likewise the important advantage of being favoured by the moneyed men; they were, besides, quickened by the ardour, and kept in constant exercise by the indefatigable zeal and restless spirit,[z] which is always observable in sectaries; and though the measure of arming the volunteers had been productive of much trouble and disorder among themselves, yet it afforded them at least the benefit of a formidable appearance.

1775. Both the aristocratic and democratic parties agree in hostility to the house of Orange.

Advantages which they possessed over the stadtholderian party.

They are supported by the moneyed men and sectaries.

To balance these unfavourable circumstances, the prince was not without considerable means, both internal and external: as captain general and admiral general of the United Provinces, he had command of the whole military and naval force of the republic: he had the nomination of all the commissioned officers in either service, and was considered by these as their patron and master; he had also the appointment of most of the civil servants of the state. The landed interest, though a much less proportion of the aristocracy of Holland to the moneyed, than the corresponding class of England, was, with few exceptions, friendly to the prince in all the provinces; even of the people, great numbers (though not amounting to a majority) were partisans of the stadtholder. But his authority and legal powers were by no means confined

Circumstances favourable to the prince.

He is commander of the army and fleet.

z Annual Register, 1786.

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to the fleet and army: by his office he was placed as president at the head of most, if not all of the civil departments of the republic. He presided, either in person or by deputy, as he chose in all the assemblies of the several respective provinces. He had a seat, though not a vote, in the assembly of the states general; and it was not merely a matter of right, but a part of his official duty, to be present at their deliberations, and to give his opinion or advice upon all matters of discussion, in which he deemed it necessary; and this had not only a great influence upon their proceedings, but in times of harmony, and under a vigorous and successful administration of public affairs, was generally decisive of their conduct. His right of nomination or rejection, with respect to the new members appointed to fill up the town senates and magistracies, was now contested, and generally overruled, but could not fail to have given him by its past operation a great influence in those distinct republics. In the quality of governor general and supreme director of the East and West India companies, the stadtholder likewise had an unbounded influence in those great commercial bodies.[a] The prince, moreover, inherited very large estates and possessions, which included palaces, cities, and castles, and endowed him with several important privileges, independent of his offices under the state. Powerful as the aristocracy was, yet the party favourable to the stadtholder had many votaries; even in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and the greater cities of Holland, which were peculiarly hostile to the house of Orange, the domineering faction had to combat numerous adversaries. In the smaller towns the parties approached more nearly to an equality: of the provincial states, Guelderland and Utrecht were devoted to William; Overyssel, Groningen, and Zealand were fluctuating, and disposed to be mediatorial; so that Holland and West Friezeland only were absolutely hostile to the stadtholder. The prince possessed an external resource and support in the friendship and protection of the illustrious Frederic: policy directed a wise king of Prussia to repress the ambition of France, and prevent

His civil power and authority.

He is governor general of the East and West India companies.

His hereditary possessions.

Several provinces favourable to his cause.

Friendship and affinity with Prussia.

a See Annual Register for 1786, p. 74.

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her from acquiring, under the name of alliance, the command of those provinces, and bound him to the antigallican party; while affinity cemented the bands by which he was connected with the house of Orange. The authority of so renowned a protector, long shielded William and his consort from any measures of extreme violence. Such was the state of affairs in the beginning of autumn 1785.

Adverse faction trusts to the protection of France.

The aristocratic faction now found themselves very potent at home, and placed unbounded confidence in the assisting power of France. Proud of this protection, and freed of every apprehension from the emperor, they became less attentive to the admonitions of Frederic himself: they proceeded at once to show that they were no longer disposed to observe any measures of amity with the prince stadtholder, nor even to preserve those outward appearances which might indicate a disposition to future conciliation. This was announced by divesting him of the government and command of the garrison of the Hague; a measure not more violent in the act, than it was degrading in the execution, through the unusual circumstances with which it was accompanied.

They deprive the prince of the command of the Hague.

The committee of the states issued a decree, by which they deprived the prince of his government and command, forbidding the troops to receive the word from him, to obey his orders in any manner, or even to pay him any of the customary military honours. To render the degradation complete, and as it were, to add the incurable sting of a personal insult, they, at the same time, stripped him of his own body guards, and even the hundred Swiss, who were destined merely to civil purposes, and to the support of state parade and magnificence. A remonstrance of the prince termed this decree a violent breach of the constitution, an invasion of his rights, and an indignity to his person and character; but his complaints produced no other satisfaction than the contemptuous intimation, that the guards were maintained for the purpose of supporting the grandeur of the state, and not for the pageantry of the stadtholder. After such an open indignity, the prince and princess could no longer continue in a city, which was the seat of the court, public business, and government; as well as the residence of all foreign ministers: they

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therefore immediately abandoned the Hague. The prince retired to his own city of Breda, and the princess with the children repaired to West Friezeland, where, notwithstanding the implacable enmity of the states of that province, the people where generally well affected to the Orange family. The faction followed their late measures by an order for furnishing the guards with new colours, in which the arms of the house of Orange were totally omitted, and those of the province of Holland substituted in their place. The king of Prussia regarded this personal insult, and violent attack upon the authority of the stadtholder, with great but regulated indignation; he still preserved the most temperate language in his remonstrances; and while his expostulations placed in the fullest light the wrongs and undeserved injuries sustained by that prince, and sufficiently indicated that he was too much interested in his cause to permit him to become ultimately a victim to oppression; yet for the present, he appeared rather in the character of a friendly neighbour to both, and an amicable mediator, wishing to reconcile the differences and misunderstandings between the parties, than the direct advocate of either :[b] but the faction was too far advanced in violence to regard moderate remonstrances; and proceeded to still greater innovations. They issued an order, that the military honours usually bestowed on the stadtholder, in all his different capacities of captain general, governor of the Hague, and commander of the garrison, should in future be paid only to the president of their committee, as the representative of the states, and to the grand pensionary of Holland. This was soon followed by an order to discharge all the troops of the province from their oath of fidelity to the stadtholder, and to prescribe a new oath, by which they were bound to the states only. The faction took the press entirely into their own hands, and the most scurrilous invectives were every day published against the stadtholder; and not only passed with impunity, but received high applause: while the most temperate writings in defence of his rights, or a bare statement of their nature, subjected

The Orange family leave the Hague.

Temperate remonstrances of Prussia;

disregarded by the faction;

who absolve the troops from their oath of fidelity.

[b] Annual Register for 1786, p. 77.

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the publishers and writers to severe and certain punishment. Such was the state of affairs at the end of the year 1785.

THE prince stadtholder from Breda had repaired to Middleburgh; but finding the faction in Holland had proceeded to extremities, he concluded force would be necessary, resolved to betake himself to the province in and near which his strength chiefly lay; and therefore, fixed his residence in Guelderland: besides vicinity to his partisans, he there could easily avail himself of the cooperation of Prussia. The faction were not at first sensible of the advantages which must accrue to the prince from the residence which he had chosen, and proceeded in their violence. Great expectations had been formed on both sides, from the assemblage of the states of Holland and West Friezeland, which was to take place at the Hague in the middle of March. When this body was convened, instead of the cool impartiality of a deliberative meeting, it exhibited all the violence and outrage of a mob; and the members appeared to have parted with the phlegm of Dutchmen, and to have borrowed the animated virulence of enraged Frenchmen. In the course of the session, the most important question which was handled by the assembly, was, whether the stadtholder should be restored to the government of the Hague? and after many vehement debates it was, on the 27th of July, carried against the prince of Orange, by a majority of only one; the numbers being ten to nine. The equestrian order, and the deputies of some towns, protested against this resolution as violent, illegal, and unconstitutional. William did not fail to express the strongest reprobation of this conduct of the states: in a letter to that body he denied the legality of one or two provinces presuming to deprive him of a power which had been conferred by the whole confederacy; he did not even acknowledge the right of the whole union to dispossess him of the dignities and powers, which were in the fullest manner rendered hereditary in his family; but without, for the present, investigating that question, he argued, that at least the retraction of the authority should be attended with the same unanimity which prevailed in the donation. The states of Holland, regarding this

Meeting of the states of Holland and West Friezeland;

violence of.

Remonstrance of the prince.

letter as a defiance, passed a second decree confirming the first. The death of Frederic brought to the throne of Prussia the brother of the princess of Orange, and produced a more active interference to support the interests of the sister, than had been employed while she was only the niece. Soon after his accession, Frederic William sent his prime minister, the count de Goertz, as ambassador extraordinary to the states of Holland; and by him a long letter[o] to the states general. This paper mingled temperance of manner with vigour of substance, and was in every respect worthy of ministers formed under the wise and resolute Frederic. Its introduction removed the objections which might be made by the states to the interference of a foreign power in their internal affairs. The firm friendship, which for two centuries had subsisted between his predecessors and the republic, would even have demanded his friendly and mediatorial interposition in the present unhappy and dangerous state of their civil dissensions: his situation, as their nearest neighbour, and the vicinity of a part of his dominions to their territories, must necessarily prevent him from being indifferent to any violent or essential change that was attempted to be made in the constitution of the republic: besides these causes, the near relation in which he stood with the prince stadtholder, and the affection which he bore to the princess his sister, rendered it impossible that he could be unconcerned in seeing them degraded from their high rank and authority, and the stadtholder arbitrarily deprived of his rights and prerogatives: he therefore, urgently pressed the states general to interpose their friendly and powerful mediation with the states of Holland and West Friezeland, that the differences between them and the stadtholder might be amicably settled, and the prince restored to his rights and dignities. The application expressed the fullest confidence that the states general would exert themselves for the attainment of its purposes; and prudently forbore any intimation of the measures which Prussia would pursue, should the letter not produce the intended effects. This representation made a very strong

Frederic William sends his prime minister ambassador to the states of Holland.

Firm memorial of.

o See State Papers of 1786, Sept. 18.

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impression on the states of five of the provinces; Holland and West Friezeland vehemently protested against foreign interference; but while they reprobated the interposition of a potentate hostile to their faction, they closely connected themselves with a power that was friendly to the anti-stadtholderian party. The court of Versailles skilfully fanned the flame of discontent by subordinate agents, but her public memorials were couched in so equivocal terms as to admit of different and even contrary constructions; and carefully abstained from pledging France to any specific line of conduct. The faction, however, was well assured of the support of France, and by that expectation inflamed to the most insolent violence: they seemed indeed not only to cast off all obedience to their own laws, but every regard to the law of nations. A courier from Berlin to London was stopped, and narrowly escaped having his despatches examined by the populace of Woerden. This outrage obliged the count de Goertz formally to demand a passport from the states general for a courier he was sending with dispatches to his royal master. The states which were in the interest of the Orange family, strongly remonstrated against the turbulent outrages of Holland, but found their interference made no impression; the standard of rebellion at length was hoisted at Hattem and Elbourg: the states of Guelderland, at the frontiers of which these towns are situated, determined to employ force in repressing revolt: they charged the prince stadtholder, as captain general, immediately to send a sufficient number of troops, under the conduct of an experienced officer, to these scenes of disturbance, with injunctions to continue there until further orders; but that if the inhabitants were to make any resistance to the performance of this service, such officer was authorized, in spite of all obstacles to support the sovereign authority of their noble mightinesses, by proceeding to force and violence in the establishment of the garrisons. General Spengler, with four regiments, and proper artillery, was appointed by the stadtholder to this service, with strict injunctions, if possible, to avoid the shedding of blood. The armed burghers of Hattem, being reinforced by as many volunteers as money or party zeal could procure

Conduct of France

encourages the faction.

Rebellion commences at Hattem.

from different quarters, exhibited a great parade of making a most obstinate resistance. Their cannon were mounted on the walls and works; and on the approach of the stadtholder's little army, as they called the regular forces by way of contempt, they fired several rounds of artillery with great briskness, but with so defective judgment in the direction, as not to produce the smallest effect. As soon as Spengler arrived within a proper distance, in order to do the least possible mischief, he pointed his artillery at the chimneys and tops of the houses only; this, however, along with the bold advance and near approach of the troops, soon produced the desired effect; the armed burghers, with their adherents and auxiliaries, abandoned the town; and Spengler's men entered at one gate, as they were retiring through another. Elbourg was relinquished in the same manner, and with still less trouble.[d] The faction commanded all the public papers, and represented the trifling affair at Hattem as a signal display of republican heroism, worthy of the descendants of those bands which had risen to vindicate their liberty from Alva and Philip; they could have completely routed the soldiers of Orange, but patriotic as well as valiant, they were willing to spare the effusion of the blood of their countrymen. In the same style of delusion, nothing could be more shocking or deplorable than the accounts which they published of the enormities, the plunder, and cruelties, committed by the troops who gained possession of Hattem and Elbourg. The capture of the two towns was represented by the faction as the actual commencement of civil war; and nothing was to be heard but execrations, as well against the states of Gueldres, as the prince stadtholder. In the province of Holland especially, the flames seemed to be blown up nearly to the greatest height at which they were capable of arriving. All regard to forms was now laid aside in completing the deposition by force, of those magistrates, senators, and members of the respective town councils, who were known or suspected to be of the opposite party. Towards the close of 1786, the fortune of the house of Orange appeared to be

The insurgents are defeated.

d See Annual Register for 1786, p. 87.

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entirely fallen; but external efforts were made in its favour, which proved ultimately successful. The king of Prussia was incessant in his endeavours to promote all such measures of conciliation, as could in any degree tend to prevent those unpleasant and dangerous consequences, which the present state of things, and the violence of the republican party, could not otherwise fail to produce. For the attainment of this purpose he showed himself disposed to try any means, however unpromising, and to coincide with any interests, however discordant, that afforded even a possibility of success.

Conciliatory interposition of Prussia,

and of Britain, unavailing.

THE court of London offered its joint mediation with Berlin; but the faction, aware of the predilection of Britain for the interest of the stadtholder, as well as the family of Orange, totally refused her mediation. The king of Prussia therefore proposed that France, the avowed friend and close ally of the republic, should, along with himself, undertake the kind office, but arduous task, of settling and composing the differences by which it was distracted. The court of France professed to receive these overtures with the warmest cordiality; and an ambassador was sent to the Hague for the purpose desired. Though such movements wore the appearance of returning tranquillity; yet it was easily seen that the actual conciliation of the contending parties was very improbable. France, it was conceived, would never really coincide with the king of Prussia in restoring the stadtholder to his power, which the faction regarded with bitter hatred; the king of Prussia would not sacrifice to France the interests of the prince of Orange, by making such concessions, as the adverse combination would require. The ministers, however, of France and Prussia entered upon the negotiation, which was carried on during the winter months; and though the mediators had agreed in their views and intentions, the objects and notions of the parties concerned were so diametrically opposite that it would be totally impossible to satisfy both. While contests, begun by an aristocratic faction, were thus distracting the United Provinces, the democratical party, which, as we have seen, the dissensions generated, was becoming extremely powerful. In Utrecht, a government entirely

Joint mediation of Prussia and France.

Different views of those powers.

Alarming power of the democratic party;

democratical was established; and in Holland the states found that in stimulating the efforts of the populace, they had called in an auxiliary more formidable than the adversary whom they desired to subdue: the violence and anarchy of mob government now prevailed throughout the provinces. It sometimes fortunately happens, that the desultory efforts of a domineering populace, from unskilful direction, produce effects diametrically opposite to the intentions. The city of Amsterdam from the beginning had been the bitterest and most implacable of the stadtholder's enemies; so that it seemed as if all the violent measures pursued against him, had originated in the pride, malice, and power of those citizens: but Amsterdam suddenly changed sides, and declared in favour of the stadtholder. To detail the causes of this revolution, belongs not to a history which considers the affairs of the United Provinces, only as they affected the interests, or came to stimulate the energies of Britain; and it may suffice to say, that the change produced great alarm in the anti-stadtholderian faction, and eventually facilitated the reestablishment of the house of Orange. The defection of Amsterdam could not but excite an universal alarm among the leaders of the revolutionary party, and urged them to the adoption of every measure that could possibly tend to counteract its effect: for this purpose they proceeded to very violent conduct; and at length resolved to propose a daring measure, which though they had often meditated, they had not yet ventured to carry into execution; this was the suspension of the prince of Orange from his offices of stadtholder and admiral general, in the same manner they had already succeeded in suspending him from his command of captain general. This question was brought forward on the 10th of January 1787, and for two succeeding days occasioned the warmest and most violent debates that had ever been known in the assembly. The proposers, however, found the opposition so formidable, and the aspect of the independent members so doubtful, that they did not choose to hazard the decision of a vote on the question.

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is exerted in levelling innovation;

defeated in an attempt to suspend the office of stadtholder.

DEFEATED in this attempt, the faction attempted a new fabrication of votes; but the project was treated with

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indignant resentment and scorn. The states of Holland deprived of the cooperation of Amsterdam, and thwarted in schemes of violence, began in spring 1787 to assume a moderate tone, and to adopt measures very disagreeable to the violent leaders of the adverse faction; the cause of the stadtholder became popular, even in the province of Holland. The aristocratic confederates hitherto, as much as possible, repressed the ambition of the democratical malcontents: but now they saw that there was no alternative but acquiescence in their claim, or submission to the stadtholder: on the former they resolved, and called in the armed burghers as their instruments in revolutionizing the state. Such reformers proceeded with the usual fury of a democratic mob. They attacked the assemblies of Rotterdam and other towns, and to produce unanimity drove away by force every member whom they knew or suspected to be friendly to the house of Orange, or enemies to boundless innovation. Encouraged by their success, they carried their reforming projects to Amsterdam; and effected a similar change in the metropolis. During antecedent disorders, the states general had observed strict impartiality; and it could not be discovered to which side they inclined; but now that an armed mob threatened confusion and anarchy, they thought it was full time to rally round the constituted authorities, in whose downfal their own ruin must be involved.

They try a new fabrication of votes.

The armed burghers are employed as instruments of revolution.

Fury of a revolutionary mob.

The states general avow themselves supporters of the constitution.

In May 1787, they avowed themselves the defenders of the existing establishments; and now it was no longer a contest between the house of Orange and a party of nobles, but between constitutional order and revolutionary rebellion. The armed populace having forcibly restored the majority of malcontents in the states of Holland, this body assumed to itself powers that could only belong to the states general. Among the respective partisans frequent skirmishes took place not without bloodshed. The revolutionary democrats did not confine themselves to personal outrage and savage cruelty, but added robbery: the richest towns of that very opulent country became scenes of pillage.[e] In the course of the summer, An-

e Annual Register, 1787, chap. i.

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terdam was a scene of more dreadful devastation, than any European metropolis had exhibited during the preceding part of the eighteenth century; it indeed afforded a specimen to the world of the consequences of a furious love of change, which entirely overleaped every bound of reason and of justice. The states of Holland were extremely anxious to obtain a command of the troops; and the states general with equal activity, and much greater effect, counteracted these efforts: this, indeed, was the less difficult, as the disposition of the army continued very favourable to the family of Orange; many, both of officers and privates, refused to obey the orders of the provincial states, and ardently desired the restitution of the stadtholder. The states general very properly encouraged this repugnance to usurped authority, and took the troops into immediate protection and pay. Colonel Balneavis, a Scottish gentleman of great ability and resolution, by his successful address was the means of recalling the military force of Holland to the service of their prince. Possessing the affection and confidence of the soldiers, he carried with him two battalions to join the stadtholder, and the other regiments immediately followed so laudable an example. But the departure of their troops, instead of intimidating the states of Holland, served only to drive them to more desperate violence.

Disorders at Amsterdam.

The army continues attached to the prince.

The faction becomes desperate.

Amidst all the rage which the revolutionists vented against the government of the house of Orange, the persons of these princes had not hitherto been violated; but the infatuated fury of a mob no longer confined itself within these bounds. The consort of the stadtholder was a princess of vigorous capacity, and intrepid spirit: from the justice of the cause, as well as the late accessions to the party, she conceived that the hour of restoration was approaching, and might be accelerated by a bold and resolute effort. She accordingly determined to leave Nimeguen, unaccompanied by her husband; to proceed to the Hague and show herself to the people; she hoped, through the states general, and other adherents, corporate and private, to effect the restoration of the prince. Accompanied only by the baroness Wassanaar, count Bentick, and a field officer or two, and attended by a few domestics, the

Arrest of the princess on her way to the Hague.

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princess arrived at the borders of Holland, near Schoonhoven. Since the departure of the constitutional troops the revolutionary burghers composed the sole military force of Holland: a party of these surrounded the carriage, and arrested the person of the princess. The commander of this notable troop was altogether worthy of such a corps; a vulgar and ignorant[f] burgher; and by unmerited authority elated to insolence, this person and his band behaved with brutal irreverence; they conducted the illustrious captive as a spectacle, with all the coarse vociferation of an exulting rabble: even when their barbarous dissonance startled the horses, and almost overturned her carriage in a canal, they would not permit the gentlemen of the suite to afford her assistance. At length they arrived at an inn; the gallant captain accompanied the princess to her room: regardless of the presence of a lady, this municipal commander kept his sword drawn; but her attendants representing the impropriety of such an exhibition, he complaisantly returned it to the scabbard: after this effort of politeness, he sat down by her side, cross-legged, and at the same time ordering beer, pipes and tobacco, enjoyed a comfortable regale, but without being seduced by such appropriate pleasure to intermit the vigilance[g] of official employment.

She is compelled to return.

After being confined several hours, commissioners arrived from the town of Woerden, who expressly told the princess she would not be allowed to continue the journey, but she might retire wherever she chose; accordingly she set out on her return to Nimeguen: the prince informed of her capture, applied to the states general for protection to his consort, and satisfaction for so gross and outrageous an insult; and his representation was seconded by a much more powerful applicant: the conduct of the revolutionists towards the princess, was attended with very important consequences. Hitherto the king of Prussia had acted towards the United Provinces as a mediating neighbour between the two parties: though naturally,

f See Annual Register for 1787, p. 32.

g The Annual Register mentions some very laughable instances of the assiduity with which the Dutch sentinels kept watch, to prevent female attendants from effecting their escape: see A. R. p. 33.

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and indeed avowedly, favourable to one, he had never intimated a design of forcible interference; but from the seizure of the princess, his relation to the provinces was changed: he was now a powerful brother demanding reparation to a sister; a mighty monarch requiring the satisfaction which he could exact. He sent a memorial to the states of Holland, wherein he insisted upon immediate and ample atonement, and also the punishment of the perpetrators: he, moreover added, that he should estimate the value which they attached to his friendship, by their compliance with this requisition.[h] Before this memorial arrived, the states of Holland had expressed their approbation of the conduct of the persons who had seized the princess: they returned a long and laboured answer; but acknowledged no blame, and proffered no satisfaction. The stubborn injustice of the states of Holland was contrasted by the fair and liberal conduct of the states general, to whom the king of Prussia had also applied: that assembly declared, that they had made repeated representations to the provincial meeting of Holland on this outrageous insult; that those states themselves must be entirely responsible for measures, in regretting and reprobating which, their high mightinesses perfectly agreed with his Prussian majesty. Frederic was determined to enforce from the states of Holland the satisfaction which they had refused to his requisition: meanwhile he repeated his demand in indignant and peremptory terms, and made a representation of their proceedings to the court of France, to which the faction chiefly trusted. His christian majesty expressed to the states very strong disapprobation of the treatment which the princess had experienced; and declared he thought the king of Prussia very fully justified in demanding ample satisfaction. Notwithstanding this intimation, the revolutionary party persisted in their course; they had no doubt that, if affairs came to an open rupture, they would receive from France an assistance proportioned to the danger by which they might be threatened: the Prussian army they knew was strong, but the French army they naturally conceived to be much strong-

On this insult the king of Prussia changes his tone.

He demands satisfaction of the states of Holland;

which is not granted.

He determines on force.

The revolutionists rely on France.

h See State papers, August 6, 1787.

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er; and they were too deeply engrossed themselves to consider or estimate internal circumstances in the dominions of their ally, which might prevent the employment of his usual force.

REPEATED remonstrances and replications passed between the states of Holland and the Prussian king during the month of August; but so little to the satisfaction of Frederic William, that he made immediate and powerful preparations for hostilities; and in the beginning of September, an army commanded by the duke of Brunswic was ready to enter the Low Countries. Having in the seven years war[i] attained a very high character for heroism and ability, while hereditary prince from the peace this commander had passed his time in tranquillity, but not idleness, devoting his attention to military and political improvement. On the death of his father, becoming reigning duke, he continued such pursuits as meliorated the condition of his territories. From these meritorious occupations he was now called to head an armament, destined to enforce the purposes of justice.

The duke of Brunswick enters the United Provinces at the head of an army.

On the 13th of September he entered the province of Guelderland, and there the country being all favourable to his attempts, he, without opposition, reached the confines of Holland. On the duke of Brunswic's approach, the revolutionary party applied to France, for aid, and obtained a promise of support.

The revolutionists apply to France for aid.

Conduct of Britain.

BRITAIN regarded with anxious attention the important events that passed in the United Provinces, and perceived that the crisis was arrived, when it must be speedily determined, whether the Dutch republic was to resume her ancient and natural connexion with her first protector or to become a mere appendage of France. Our sovereign, during the course of the disputes, repeatedly offered his friendly mediation; but his interposition was extremely disagreeable to the revolutionary faction, which could not stand the award of an impartial umpire. The court of London was confident that the internal strength of the constitutional party, seconded by the king of Prussia, was perfectly adequate to the adjustment of disputes,

i See our narrative of the campaigns of the allies in Germany, in the first chapters of this history, *passim*.

and the resumption of constitutional rights, if France did not interfere with an armed force. Dignity, justice, and policy, called from his majesty explicit avowals[k], that he would not remain a quiet spectator of such forcible interference. In these circumstances, the chief object of British policy, concerning Holland, was to watch the movements of the court of Versailles. A message from his christian majesty announced to our king, that he had determined to afford to the states of Holland the assistance which they had requested. Such an intimation demanded only one line of conduct; our king accordingly declared to France, that if she interposed forcibly, Britain should take an active part; and he gave immediate directions for augmenting his fleet and army. A powerful armament was equipped with uncommon expedition: a decisive and grand tone, worthy of mighty power supporting conscious justice, produced the desired effect; and France made no hostile effort to support the revolutionary faction. The energetic vigour of the British cabinet being so successfully exerted towards the formidable ally of the states of Holland, the duke of Brunswic proceeded in a rapid career of victory. The hidden friends of the house of Orange now publicly declared themselves: the revolutionists, however, still entertaining hopes France would not yield, threw themselves into Amsterdam, and resolved to stand a siege; but finding their expectations entirely vanished, they at length entered into a capitulation; the constitutional party proved completely triumphant, and the stadtholder was restored to all his rights and dignities. The discussion which arose between Britain and France terminated amicably, after his christian majesty had declared, that in intimating a design of active interposition in the affairs of Holland, he had never intended forcible efforts.[l] Such was the result of the disputes in the United Provinces, and the measures which Britain adopted respecting the contests. This was the first occasion that displayed the genius and energy of Pitt in foreign policy, and procured him general admiration abroad and at home. Oppo-

The king of France intimates an intention of assisting the states of Holland.

Our king declares he will forcibly oppose such interference; and prepares an armament.

France thereupon relinquishes her design; and the duke of Brunswic is completely victorious.

Restoration of the stadtholder.

Great and unanimous praises of the British cabinet.

k See his majesty's speech, November 27, 1787. State papers.

l See correspondence between the respective ministers of Britain and France on this subject, in the state papers of October 1787.

Pitt's bill for the relief and recompense of the America loyalists.—Commencement of Hastings's trial.—Speec of Mr. Burke.—Motion for the impeachment of sir Eli jah Impey—negatived.—Mr. Grenville's bill for improv ing his father's law respecting contested elections.—Sup plies.—Flourishing state of commerce and finance.

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1787. Meeting of parliament.

PARLIAMENT assembled on the 27th o November; and his majesty's speech exhibited to th houses an outline of the policy which he had adopte concerning Holland. He had endeavoured by his goo offices to restore tranquillity between the contending pa ties, but found his efforts unavailing: he also discovere a desire of forcible interference on the part of France he expressed to his christian majesty his determinatio to counteract any such intention, and had armed for thi purpose; but the success of the Prussian troops had re established the lawful government in Holland; an expl nation had taken place between his majesty and the kin of France, which had terminated amicably, and both pa ties had agreed to disarm. The necessary preparation had produced extraordinary expenses for which he doubt ed not his faithful commons would provide, and als adopt proper means for the defence of his distant dc minions. He rejoiced at the flourishing state of com merce and the revenue, and the zeal and unanimity whic his subjects demonstrated during the late expectation c war. From the dispositions which were then manifestec in any future emergency, he should depend on a prompt ness and vigour of exertion, proportionate to the exigenc by which it might be required.

Unanimous approbation of the conduct of ministry respecting Holland.

THE conduct of Mr. Pitt respecting Holland was ex tremely popular among all parties throughout the king dom; and in both houses it experienced the same unan mous commendation. Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, and Mr Sheridan, perfectly coincided with Mr. Pitt and his friend in the general principle of interference in continental af fairs to preserve the balance of Europe. In the house c peers the bishop of Landaff, in justifying the principle adduced reasoning at once appropriate to that specifi case, and generalizing the constituents of wise and jus

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interposition in any future circumstances. "Upon what ground (he said) did he approve of our late interference? on the ground of SELF PRESERVATION. *If France had gained Holland, the security of Britain would have been endangered:* when it is said that Holland and the other states of Europe are independent states, the proposition is true only on a certain consideration, for they all depend one upon another, like the links of a chain; and it is the business of each to watch every other, lest any become so weighty and powerful as to endanger the security or political importance of the rest."

Bishop of Landaff's view of British interference in continental affairs.

DURING the preparations, a subsidiary treaty had been concluded with the landgrave of Hesse Cassel; by which that prince was to receive 36,093l. to hold twelve thousand troops ready to be employed by Britain when their services should be required. This treaty was part of a general system, which it was then deemed premature to detail: the motion passed without a division. On the 10th of December an augmentation of the army was proposed, for the purpose recommended by his majesty's speech, of strengthening our distant possessions. On particular inquiry into the state of defence of our western settlements, ministers had found the force to be inadequate; this opinion had been confirmed by the reports of the officers commanding in the West Indies, who had been severally consulted upon the troops which each thought requisite for the security of the island he commanded. It was objected by some members of opposition, that the opinions of our commanders abroad did not afford satisfactory grounds for increasing our present establishments. It was obvious, that each of these officers would demand as large a force as he thought adequate to the defence of his own particular situation, and would govern himself in such requisition, merely by a regard to his own responsibility; whereas, in judging of an adequate peace establishment for all the possessions of Britain, the whole would depend on a general view of its parts, and their relative exigencies; by the present motion the house was called on to vote an increase of the army without sufficient grounds. It was replied, that the opinion of the officers had not been asked on the

Subsidiary treaty with the landgrave of Hesse Cassel.

Plan for the defence of the West Indies.

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whole force requisite for the defence of the West Indies, but that undoubtedly in forming plans concerning remote objects, men must proceed on information, and in seeking information must have recourse to those by whom it can be best afforded; officers who had been on the spot were certainly competent to state the separate facts, on the joint result of which ministers formed their inferences. The West India islands were, without doubt, objects of the highest importance to Britain. For their secure defence, three modes might be mentioned: first, a great stationary fleet: secondly, succours might be sent on the prospect of a rupture; or thirdly, such a military force as would prevent a surprise. The experience of last war proved that a fleet could not solely defend these possessions; since some of the islands had been wrested from us, when our naval strength was equal to the strength of the enemy: respecting the second means, it might be unsafe to detach any part of our army or navy from Europe; and though there should be no danger in the attempt, the succours might not arrive in time to prevent mischief; therefore the most eligible mode was to have a sufficient military force upon the respective islands to secure them from surprise; since, from the dispersion and distance of the islands, and the peculiarities of that climate, winds, and currents, it would sometimes be absolutely impossible for a fleet to afford that speedy relief which the occasion might require.

1788. Complaint of a partial promotion of flag officers.

AFTER the recess, one of the first subjects of discussion before the commons was a recent promotion of flag officers during the preparations for war. Sixteen captains had been promoted to the flag, and about forty passed over. This partial promotion had greatly displeased the officers whom it omitted. They brought forward their complaint in the house of peers, under the patronage of lord Rawdon, who moved for the presentment of an address to the king, praying, that he would be graciously pleased to take into his royal consideration the services of such captains of his majesty's navy, as were passed over in the last promotion. Lord Howe, first commissioner of the admiralty, endeavoured to justify the conduct of the board; to execute beneficially the functions of their office, the lords of the

admiralty must employ their own judgment and discretion in delegating an important trust: unless they were invested with the privilege of selection, they certainly could not undertake the burden of responsibility. His lordship could not state in a public assembly the particular grounds on which he had formed his judgment; there might be several reasons for not promoting captains to be admirals, without impeaching the character of the officers in question. The same persons might be fit for a subordinate employment, without being qualified for a higher trust; officers who had served ably and meritoriously all their lives, might not appear proper to be intrusted with the care of a fleet. So important a charge ought to be committed to men, not only of firm minds, but of such bodily strength as would enable them to endure the fatigues of the hard service which they might have to sustain. The executive government must have the choice of its own officers in the various degrees and kinds of service, otherwise it cannot be responsible for the effectual discharge of its duties. On these grounds the motion was rejected by the lords: in the commons a similar proposition was brought forward and supported by greater particularity of detail, in order to illustrate individual hardships; but as the general principle was the same, the proposed address was negatived, though by a small majority. It was afterwards moved, that the arbitrary powers which were claimed by the admiralty, having in some degree received the sanction of the house, to prevent the mischievous consequences which might ensue, they should adopt, as a rule of service, some permanent principle, to which officers might trust; and a motion was made, that it is highly injurious to the navy, to set aside from promotion to flags, meritorious officers of approved service, who are not precluded by the orders of his majesty in council. Ministers objected to the propositions as unnecessary; and it was negatived.

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Ministers contend that the complaint is unfounded.

The most important measure of this session, was a bill introduced by Mr. Pitt to explain doubts which had arisen concerning a part of the law of 1784, for the administration of British India. During the apprehensions of a rupture with France, government had formed a resolution of send-

Declaratory law for explaining certain parts of Mr. Pitt's East India bill.

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Origin of the doubts from which this measure proceeded.

ing out four additional regiments to India, on board the company's ships, for the protection of our possessions in that quarter; and the proposition had been received with general approbation by the court of directors. Though apprehensions of war were dissipated, yet government was anxious for the security of distant possessions, and for that purpose proposed a permanent establishment of his majesty's troops in India; on these grounds they adhered to the determination of sending the soldiers. A question had arisen between the directors and the board of control, concerning the expense of their conveyance, their future pay and subsistence. By an act which passed in the year 1781, it was stipulated, that the company should be bound to pay for such troops only, as were sent to India upon their requisition: and upon this act the directors had refused to charge the company with the expense of the forces now about to be sent. The board of control contended, that they were invested with a power of ordering the conveyance of such troops as circumstances might require; and that if the directors refused, the expense should be defrayed out of the revenues which arose from their territorial possessions. The court of directors took the advice of several eminent lawyers, who concurred in their opinion. Mr. Pitt, impressed with the contrary idea, proposed to bring in a bill for removing the doubts in question, by declaring the intention of the legislature in the act of 1784, to have been agreeable to the construction put upon it by administration. By the law of 1784 he contended, every power, which before that time was intrusted to the court of directors for administering the territorial possessions, was by that act vested in the board of control. Those commissioners had the sole direction of the military and political concerns, the collection and management of territorial revenue. His object had been to leave to the corporate proprietors, and their representatives, the direction of those commercial concerns for which their charter had been granted, but to take into the hands of the executive government territorial affairs; under the political department was evidently to be classed, the disposal of troops, and the provisions for their maintenance.

Regiments ordered by government to India, to be paid and subsisted at the expense of the company.

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As doubts were entertained and sanctioned by legal authority highly respectable, he proposed an act declaring the meaning of the law. This motion was controverted, first, on general grounds: legislature ought never to have recourse to this expedient, except when either the wording of an act was evidently so ambiguous as to stand in need of explanation, or where, in consequence of the clashing judgment of courts, or doubts expressed by judges from the bench, it became necessary for the legislature to propound anew its own meaning. In all other cases, parliament by interfering would quit its legislative, and assume a judicial capacity; and in the present instance would decide in a cause, in which it was in some respects interested as a party; since it would gain by its own decision. It was a dispute between the crown or the public, and a corporation, on a pecuniary claim. The king insists upon a certain sum of money from the company, for a specified object. The company admit a sum to be due, but not the amount demanded: here is a clear and simple question, on which an issue might be tried in a court of law. The measure proposed was liable to many serious political objections, and might be used as a precedent for the worst purposes. A minister has nothing to do but to propose, and bring in a bill for granting new powers, in doubtful and ambiguous words, under restraints indistinctly defined, and with clauses that have a double aspect. The company had been induced to consent to the act of 1784, upon pretences, which now proved to be delusive; and the minister, having obtained that consent, was resolved to put his own construction upon it, contrary to the original intention of the party concerned. In the farther progress of the bill, counsel was heard for the India company at the bar of the house, and the whole ability of opposition was exerted, to prevent its enactment.

Question; Had government by Mr Pitt's law that power? denied by the directors and opposition in parliament.

THE following was the substance of the arguments, legal and political, which were employed on each side. Its opponents controverted it principally upon two grounds: first, that the construction attempted to be put upon the act of 1784, was not its true and just construction: and secondly, that if it admitted such interpretation, the powers it vested in the board of con-

Arguments against the declaratory bill

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trol were injurious to the rights and interests of that company, and of a dangerous political nature, and therefore ought not to be confirmed. To prove the former proposition, its supporters contended that, the charters granted to the company having been purchased for a valuable consideration, every statute that diminished their rights ought to be construed, like penal laws, in the mildest sense, and so as to infringe those privileges in the lowest possible degree; and in ambiguous cases, acts of parliament should be explained in such a sense as to be consistent with each other. In the act of 1781[m] it was expressly stipulated, that the company should defray the expence of no troops, but such as were sent to India upon their own requisition; therefore the acts of 1784 should be interpreted so as to coincide with the preceding law. But the best and safest mode of expounding a statute, was to illustrate one part of it by other clauses of the same act. By the law of 1784,[n] "the commissioners (it was admitted) are authorized and empowered from time to time, to "superintend, direct, and control all acts, operations, and "concerns, which in anywise relate to the civil or military "government, or revenues of the territorial possessions of "the company, in the manner in the said act directed:" and "the court of directors are required to pay obedience "to, and to be governed and bound by, such orders and "directions as the said court shall receive from the said "board." Were these clauses taken solely, it was allowed that they would justify the construction which was intended by the declaratory act; but from subsequent passages it was argued, that the positive directorial power of the commissioners was restrained to definite circumstances; and to be exercised on specified omissions of the East India directors. The directors by the act were required to deliver to the commissioners copies of all despatches which were received from their servants in India, and all instructions proposed to be sent to the company's officers in that country: these the commissioners, within fourteen days, were to return to the directors, either approved or disapproved and amended; and the

m See act of parliament 1781, respecting India.
n See act for the government of India, July, 1784.

directors were bound to obey the orders so amended or altered. If within fourteen days the court of directors should neglect to yield the obedience commanded by the act, then and then only, the commissioners might originate instructions. If the board were invested with the positive power claimed by the declaratory act, it was absurd to specify certain cases in which it might be lawful for them to send orders and instructions to the company's servants in India without the consent of the company. It was evident, from the whole tenor of the clauses taken together, that the authority vested in the commissioners was no other than a superintendency and control over the transactions of the company in their management of their affairs in India; a power to alter and amend their orders and instructions, and, in case of neglect in the directors, to carry such orders so amended into execution; but not to originate measures, in opposition to the chartered and stipulated right of the company. It was farther contended, that the directors had understood the power proposed to be conferred by Mr. Pitt's bill on the commissioners, to be subject to the alleged limitations; and that even the minister had expressly declared his coincidence in that construction; that otherwise the directors would have opposed it as no less hostile to the rights of the company, than the obnoxious bill of Mr. Fox.[o] The board of control itself had not understood the act of 1784 as investing them with the unlimited sway which they now claimed; they had acted upon the statute of 1781 for upwards of two years after the law of 1784, and by their conduct admitted that they had no power to send out any of his majesty's troops to India without the consent of the company. From the general rules of interpretation, from the clauses and tenor of the act in question, the opinions of those whom it first affected, the declaration of its framer, and the construction of the persons who were appointed to carry it into execution, members of opposition endeavoured to prove, that the power now proposed to be declared did not arise from it as a law.[p]

o Speech of Mr. Fox on the second reading of the bill.
p See parliamentary debates, March 1788, *passim*.

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THEY next objected to it as a measure of policy: the authority which was claimed annihilated the court of directors, and even the property of the company. The territorial revenues being in many instances unavoidably implicated in their commercial concerns, the absolute command of the former, as to their application and expenditure, would necessarily carry with it a control over the latter, and might be used to supersede the efficiency of the directors in the only branch of the company's affairs that was left to their management. The measure itself of sending four regiments to India was not less injurious to the rights and interests of the company, than the unlimited power under which it was to be executed. It would have been more economical and just, either to have suffered the company to raise four regiments, or to have sent over the 2,400 men which were wanting to complete the king's regiments already in India:—more economical, because in the one case the company's troops are, and would be maintained at infinitely less expense than the king's; in the other, the company would be free from the additional burden of all the officers of the four new regiments:—more just, because in the former case, the company would have enjoyed the patronage of the troops which they were to pay, and might provide for many of their own deserving officers, six hundred of whom, reduced at the late peace, were living in very distressed situations in India. It was farther impolitic, as it would create a jealousy and disgust among the officers in the company's service. The opponents next proceeded to the motives of ministers, which they alleged to be a desire of extending their own influence and patronage, at the expense of the India company. The ministers had formed a regular progressive plan, to grasp all the patronage of India. The direction claimed by the board of control afforded grounds of jealousy in another view; it placed a revenue at the disposal of the king's ministers, for raising and paying an army without consent of parliament, and was therefore inconsistent with the bill of rights, and a dangerous departure from the principles of the British constitution.

Arguments for it.

BY the supporters of the declaratory act, it was contended, first, respecting the rule of construction, that the

principle could only be admitted, so far as was consistent with the spirit and express objects of the statute itself; it could be no reason for an interpretation of a subsequent law, that it militated against a prior; it would be absurd to put a sense upon an act, that would defeat the main ends for which it was passed; and with regard to the act of 1781, such parts of it as were inconsistent with the provisions of the subsequent arrangement, were virtually, though not expressly repealed. The object of the plan of 1784 was, to take the entire management of territorial possessions, and the political government of India, out of the hands of the company, leaving them only the direction of their commercial concerns. The board of control was in future to be responsible to the public for the prosperity defence, and security, of our Indian possessions, and was therefore to be invested with all the authorities necessary for the due discharge of the important trusts. These powers were given in general terms, and the mode of exercising them in particular cases was specified: in some they had a negative upon the orders of the directors; in others, where a difference of opinion arose, the board might enforce the execution of its own orders. The act in general clauses expressed this power which was claimed, and without it would have been totally inadequate to its object. Could it be supposed that parliament intended to leave to the company, who, it might be expected from the short duration of their charter, would attend chiefly to their own immediate pecuniary interests, the entire disposition of their revenues, without enabling the board of control, who were responsible for the defence and security of the whole, to appropriate such part of them as should be thought necessary for those purposes? The assertion of opposition, that either Mr. Pitt or the board of control had understood the act in the sense imputed, was totally unfounded in truth, and unsupported by any evidence. With regard to the economy and policy of the measure, the company's troops might be raised and maintained at a smaller expense; but these were not sufficient for guarding India against dangers by which it was now threatened. As to the additional patronage said to accrue to the crown, it was denied: on the grand question of standing armies,

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there were inaccuracies in all the existing laws. The bill of rights was not very explicit; it hardly stated the illegality of a standing army within the kingdom, but was silent with respect to military force in our settlements abroad. Mr. Pitt declared, that if any danger was apprehended from the bill before the house, relative either to the augmentation of the army, or the patronage of India in general, he was ready to receive any modifications which might be offered to avert such danger. In the committee he proposed several clauses for so modifying the bill, as to remove the objections respecting patronage.

The bill is passed into a law.

The bill was carried in the house of commons by a majority of fifty-four; and, after experiencing strong opposition in the house of peers, was passed into a law; and thus it was declared that the commissioners, being instituted for the territorial administration of India by the act of 1784, possessed a directorial, as well as controlling power, in whatever was necessary to the effectual execution of the trust reposed in them by the act of 1784.

Extension of the mutiny bill.

In the mutiny bill of this session, a clause was proposed for incorporating with the army a new body of military artificers. It was objected to this project, that it was an unnecessary extension of the military law, and consequently inconsistent with the principles of the constitution. These artificers had served the army, hitherto, without diminution of their liberty, and no necessity was shown why their tenure of service should be changed. The great advocate for the clause was the duke of Richmond.[q] Such a corps (he said) was employed in all the armies abroad, and found to be extremely useful: he had proposed such an establishment to his majesty, who was pleased to signify his approbation of the scheme. The policy of the nation had considered it as right that all soldiers should continue in such a state of subordination; therefore artificers, being enlisted regularly as soldiers, ought undoubtedly to become subject to the same law. Such a change was not to be accounted any hardship; since no species of trial, however popular it might be, was more fair and candid than trials by a court martial. The

q Debates of the peers, 1788.

clause, after a long discussion, was at length carried without a division.

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Bill against the smuggled exportation of wool.

At the instance of the woollen manufacturers, a bill was introduced in the house of commons, for rendering more effectual, laws against the private exportation of wool. The manufacturers asserted, that of long or combing wool, to the amount of 13,000 packs were annually smuggled to France: hence it was inferred; first, that the wool growers were by this means enabled within the kingdom to keep up the price of their commodity beyond its just standard, to the great detriment of our staple manufacture; secondly, that there ensued a loss to Britain of the surplus value of the manufactured articles over the raw materials, and of the increased population, which the employment of an additional number of manufacturers would produce; and thirdly, that the smuggled wool being an article necessary to the French manufactures, it enabled them to rival ours. In answer to these arguments, it was contended, chiefly by country gentlemen, that it was an unnecessary and unjust attack upon the landed interest. The quantity alleged to be smuggled bore no proportion to the whole produce of the country, and subtracted only about a fifteenth share, even at the calculation of the proposers; but there was no evidence of the calculation being just. The price of wool was not enhanced beyond its just standard: as a proof that the manufacture was not injured by it, they demonstrated the increase of the value of woollen goods, exported from the year 1776 to the year 1787, to be in the proportion of nearly one-third. Upon the second inference it was said, that admitting the quantity of wool stated to be smuggled into France, it did not follow that our manufacturers would work up that additional quantity above what they now do, merely by preventing its making its way thither; on the contrary, unless it were first proved, which had never been asserted, that, in consequence of the exportation, the manufacturers are in want of materials to work upon, it was fair to conclude, that the quantity exported was a mere surplus, and that the British manufacturers would not work a single pound more, though the whole should be kept at home: a view

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of the very flourishing state of our manufactures was sufficient to convince us that there was no ground of apprehension from the rivalship of France. It was replied, that the restraints proposed to be laid upon the wool-growers would not materially affect their interests. The present bill was consonant to the existing laws, and was only designed to carry into more effectual execution those principles of policy, respecting the exportation of wool, by which this country for so many years had been governed, and under which both our manufacturers and our wool-growers had flourished and grown rich together. The bill underwent a very minute discussion, in which party politics appeared to occupy no share; and at length was carried by a large majority.

Commencement of an inquiry concerning negro slavery.

A SUBJECT of very considerable importance, and which long occupied the attention both of parliament and the nation, was this year for the first time brought before the house of commons: this was the celebrated question concerning the trade carried on for purchasing negro slaves to cultivate our possessions in the western world.

State of facts.

SLAVERY is so evidently repugnant to the feelings of a Briton, that it may at first sight appear astonishing by what means had been devised to prevent the existence of such a state in the British dominions. The mercantile character of this country predominated over the political, when, for the acquisition of wealth, she admitted the destruction of freedom; and the guardians of European liberty became the most active instruments of African slavery. This inconsistency did not appear to have impressed any of the most zealous and powerful champions of constitutional freedom, during the greater part of the eighteenth century.

General and special objections to slaves.

Planters and traders, who are the most frequent and constant observers of this state, were not likely to testify an abhorrence of a system, by which they were so considerable gainers, or even perhaps to feel the adequate detestation for oppressions, with which they were so familiar. Statesmen might overlook some rigours, through which they conceived the nation derived private and public wealth; and the people in general were too distant to consider the condition of the negroes. Nevertheless, the mild and liberal principles of British policy seemed extremely inimical to human thraldom; and the doctrines

of benevolent philosophers were totally hostile to such a practice; but neither enlightened policy, nor ingenious theory, were the causes which at this period produced a prevalent enmity to slavery: a more rapidly operative principle exerted itself in favour of negro freedom: religious zeal was infused into the subject, and, engaging the passions of many individuals, stimulated them much more powerfully than the deductions of moral science, or the dictates of political wisdom. An opinion was eagerly disseminated, that the state of slavery was incompatible with christianity. This notion seems to have been drawn from the consideration of detached passages, rather than from the general spirit of that admirable system. The religion of Jesus, seeking the happiness of mankind, finds its sources in the disposition and character of the individual; and comprehending the vast variety of situation and sentiment, delivers general rules, enforced by cogent motives, for performing the various duties of social and civil life; political establishments and gradations it leaves to be formed according to the circumstances of the case, and character of the people. Philanthropy, which mingled with a piety sincere, though somewhat eccentric, distinguished many of the earliest votaries of negro freedom; and in the ardour of benignant project, overlooked difficulties of execution; indeed, perhaps, rather indulged itself in fancying advantage from the change, than accurately ascertained the probability of benefit, even should their wish be accomplished. In the southern provinces of America, soon after the establishment of their independence, the quakers presented a strong and pathetic address to the several legislative assemblies; in which they exhorted these bodies to abolish slavery; and in many instances emancipated the negroes in their own possession. In Britain the same sect first followed the example of their American brethren, and presented a similar petition in 1787 to parliament. The cause embraced by the enthusiasm of religion and benevolence, procured a great number of votaries. From sympathy and imitation, it became extremely popular; literary ingenuity was not wanting, and no works were read with such avidity, as compositions which decried negro slavery.

It is impugned as inimical to christianity, as well as justice and humanity.

Pious and benevolent enthusiasm in favour of the negroes.

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As usual in controversy, one side of the question only was considered by its supporters, and the statement of propositions was such, as to render conclusions obvious. A topic repeatedly employed was, DIFFERENCE OF COLOUR IS NO REASON FOR FORFEITURE OF LIBERTY. On so trivial a truism very popular pamphlets were founded; eminent divines embraced the cause; recommended it from the pulpit, and in printed discourses. Churchmen and dissenters concurred in eagerly inculcating the abolition of slavery; many were so far transported by philanthropic feelings, as to declare their readiness to forego all the advantages and habitual gratifications which arose from our West India islands, rather than enjoy them through the compulsory labour of their fellow-creatures. With this enthusiastic zeal, hypocrisy, as usual, occasionally mingled; and there were demagogues who, without possessing much tenderness of disposition themselves, courted popularity by coinciding with the humane sentiments, which were so generally diffused. For a considerable time a stranger might have supposed, if he judged from prevalent discourse and writing, that the African negroes monopolized misery, and therefore, that the highest duty of christian benevolence was to afford them relief. While this fervour predominated, a society was formed to collect information on which to ground a petition to parliament; and a very considerable sum of money was subscribed in order to defray the expense.

Mr. Wilberforce; talents, character, and laudable zeal of.

AMONG those who took the most active share in endeavouring to relieve the negroes, was Mr. Wilberforce, member of parliament for the county of York. Of good talents, active and indefatigable industry, and extensive knowledge, this gentleman held a high place in the public estimation; and possessed considerable fortune and influence: these advantages he uniformly directed to such pursuits as he thought conducive to virtue, religion, and the happiness of his fellow-creatures. Conceiving the cause of the negroes to be that of piety and humanity, he had employed persevering labour, in order to learn the particulars of their treatment; and viewing the subject as a British senator, he attempted to reconcile political expediency

with what he deemed a discharge of christian and moral duty. From these motives he was believed to have entered much more minutely into the detail of the slave trade, than any other member of the legislature. CHAP. XXXIX. 1788.

Opposite arguments.

WHILE one party exerted itself so strenuously to render the abolition generally popular, and thereby prepared to facilitate its passage through parliament, another with less animation and impressiveness of eloquence, but with a considerable share of sound reasoning, laboured to prove, that the advantages alleged to be consequent upon abolition were ideal, and founded upon abstract theories of philanthropy, without a knowledge of the existing case. The evil of slavery (it was said) depends on opinion: that state is universally prevalent in Africa; and the minds of the negroes are habituated to its contemplation, as one of the most common conditions of life. Having the principles of dissension and hostility in common with other men, the African tribes are often engaged in war: one consequence of war is captivity; the usual treatment of captives is either massacre or sale. The market for slaves, independent of European purchasers, is comparatively inconsiderable in Nigritia. The chance to the individual of escaping butchery, in a great measure depends on the demand from European traders. Carried to the West Indies, the negroes are on the whole well treated: by some individual masters they may have been hardly used; but in general, as can be proved from persons most conversant with these countries, they are contented and happy. Severity is not the interest of planters; and if even malignant passions transport masters or their delegates to unwise cruelty, the recurrence of such acts may be prevented by judicious regulations. Narrow in their views, the negroes like other savages repose their chief happiness in the supply of animal wants: indolent and improvident, they are often deficient in the exertions requisite for their maintenance. Nothing is more frequent in Africa than famine, which destroys great numbers of the inhabitants; whereas in the West Indies they have abundance of provisions. To a Briton, death, either by sword or famine, may be preferable to life and slavery; but to a Nigritian the case is far different: by transport-

Slavery an evil great or small, according to the circumstances and sentiments of the sufferers.

The condition of African negroes is meliorated by becoming slaves to British masters.

Slaves in our plantations generally happy.

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ing him to a situation, in which his animal wants are fully supplied, where by personal exertions he can modify slavery, and has nothing to fear from either famine or a victorious enemy, you place him in a higher state, according to his estimate of good, than if you had suffered him to remain in Africa. The slave trade does not on the whole violate humanity, because it does not on the whole diminish that happiness which humanity seeks to promote. The culture of the West India islands, so productive a source of private opulence and public revenue, depends upon labourers inured to such a climate. Were we to forego the advantage of such possessions, what would be the consequence? the other European states would take up the benefits which we abandoned: the slave trade would be still carried on, though Britain did not participate. It would not be real generosity, but romantic extravagance, to abstain from so advantageous a commerce, when we ourselves should lose, and our rivals only should gain by its discontinuance. Very great capitals have been embarked, both in the West India islands and African slave trade, under the sanction of public faith, which guaranteed the commerce by many internal regulations and foreign treaties for rendering it productive. Are we to sacrifice a great and valuable property to philanthropic chimeras, totally unfounded in fact and experience?

If Britain abolish slavery, other European states will reap the benefit.

Great capitals embarked in this trade, which is a large source of riches and revenue.

Petitions for and against the slave trade. The council institutes an inquiry into the details and alleged cruelties.

PETITIONS and remonstrances containing such topics, for and against the abolition, were presented to the house of commons and privy council. A committee of the latter was appointed for investigating facts. Mr. Pitt finding that the information hitherto collected was not sufficient to authorize parliamentary discussion, on the ninth of May proposed, that the consideration of the slave trade should be deferred till the commencement of the next session; meanwhile, the inquiry which was instituted before the privy council would be brought to such a state of maturity, as to make it fit that the result should be laid before the house, that it might facilitate their investigation, and enable them to proceed to a decision, founded equally upon principles of humanity, justice, and sound policy.

SIR WILLIAM DOLBEN introduced a measure of intermediate relief, in a bill for regulating the transportation of

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African natives to the British West Indies: the object of this proposition was to accommodate the slaves, during their passage, better than had been hitherto done. It was intended to limit the number who should be conveyed, in proportion to the tonnage of the vessel; to secure to them good and sufficient provisions, and other matters equally conducive to their health, and their accommodation. While the bill was pending, a petition was presented from the merchants and other inhabitants of Liverpool, praying to be heard by their counsel against this regulating bill: this request being granted, it was contended at the bar of the house, that the proposed reduction of number would essentially injure the trade, and that it was founded on an assertion of hardships which did not exist. The plea of the merchants was not made out to the satisfaction of the house; and the bill, though in a small degree modified, passed unanimously, without any material alteration. In the house of lords it underwent such changes, that the commons considered its original object as not attained: a new bill was accordingly introduced, which passed both houses, and received the royal assent.

Sir William Dolben's motion for regulating the transportation of negroes.

Is passed into a law.

About the same time, Mr. Pitt called the attention of the house to a different class of sufferers, the American loyalists, and the losses sustained by them through their adherence to the parent country during the late war. Commissioners had been appointed to inquire into the claims; and in consequence of their report, the minister divided the claimants into four classes. In the first class he ranked those who had resided in America at the commencement of the war, and who, in pursuance of their principles of loyalty and adherence to Britain, were obliged to abandon their estates and property in the colonies; which were in consequence seized and confiscated by the revolters. The mode he meant to adopt[r], with respect to this class of loyalists, whom he considered as having the strongest claims of any, would be to allow the full amount[s]

Mr. Pitt's bill for the relief and recompense of the American loyalists.

r See Annual Register 1788, p. 13.

s His proposition was, "that all such loyalists shall receive the full amount of their losses, as far as the same do not exceed the sum of ten thousand pounds; and shall also receive, where the amount of such losses shall be above ten thousand pounds in the whole, and not above thirty-five thousand pounds in the

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to those whose demands were so small, that any deduction from them would materially affect their means of comfortable existence. The second class of claimants were persons who, having resided in England during the war, made claims upon alleged loss of property in America; these were not sufferers in the same degree as the first class, because they had not been driven out of America, but had made their choice: though, however, their option was to remain in England, still they were entitled to expect compensation for the loss of property in America, which they had incurred through a preference of this country: he proposed respecting this as the former class, that property affording only the means of comfortable subsistence should be paid in full of the established claims; but that beyond the sum deemed requisite, the deduction should be considerably greater.[t] The third class consisted of loyalists who had either enjoyed places or exercised professions in America, but were driven away in consequence of their loyalty to this country, and lost their income. With regard to these it was to be considered, that though they had been expelled from America, they were able to obtain fresh incomes in this country, by exercising their talents and their industry: he therefore proposed, that all whose incomes did not exceed four hundred pounds a year, should receive halfpay; persons whose incomes were higher, should receive forty pounds for every hundred above four hundred, and under fifteen hundred; and beyond that sum, at the rate of thirty per cent. The fourth class of claimants consisted of those who had been obliged to leave their habitations and property in consequence of the cession of that country at the late peace: as their loss had been incurred by a national act, without any alternative of their own, he proposed that they should be completely reimbursed by the public. He then stated the

whole, ninety pounds per cent. of such part of the said losses as shall exceed ten thousand pounds; and where such losses shall be above thirty-five thousand pounds, eighty-five pounds per cent. of such of the said losses as shall exceed ten thousand pounds; and where the same shall be above fifty thousand pounds, eighty pounds per cent. of such part of the said losses as shall be above ten thousand pounds."

t That from all those claims, amounting from ten thousand pounds to thirty thousand, a deduction should be made of twenty per cent.; and a farther additional deduction of twenty per cent in progression, upon every additional fifty thousand claimed.

sum to which the established claims amounted. The propositions which he founded on this account were received with great approbation, and a resolution for the payment of the same, after some modification, was unanimously adopted. Thus, sufferers through loyalty and patriotism to our sovereign and country, received from the national munificence a liberal compensation for the damages which they had sustained. CHAP. XXXIX. 1788.

A CONSIDERABLE portion of parliamentary attention was directed to the prosecution and trial of Mr. Hastings. In consequence of the order of the house of lords, near the close of the last session, to the defendant to deliver answers to the charges alleged against him by the house of commons, on the prescribed day he appeared at the bar, and presented answers. Of these the lords sent a copy to the house of commons; the answers being read, Mr. Burke moved, that they should be referred to a committee which should have the conduct of the prosecution. This measure being embraced, Mr. Pitt proposed Mr. Burke as the first member; the house unanimously concurring, Mr. Burke named Mr. Francis, and to support his nomination, stated the immense advantages which would accrue to the committee from the very extensive knowledge of that gentleman. The abilities and information of Mr. Francis were universally allowed; but great political differences had subsisted between him and the accused, in India, and some personal animosity was conceived to remain; on these grounds a great majority of the house voted against the motion. The rest of the committee consisted of the same gentlemen who had been delegated to present the charges to the lords; and in addition to them, Mr. Wilbraham, Mr. Fitzpatrick, and Mr. Courtney. To the answer of Mr. Hastings, two days after, Mr. Burke brought from the committee a replication, averring the charges to be true, and that they would be ready to prove the same against him before the lords, at such convenient time and place as should be appointed. The reply being carried by Mr. Burke to the peers, Wednesday the thirteenth of February was fixed for proceeding upon the trial in Westminster hall; and the members of the recently appointed com- Commencement of the trial of Mr. Hastings.

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mittee were nominated managers for conducting the trial. Mr. Fox proposed that Mr. Francis should be added to the committee; but the majority of the house continued to oppose the insertion of his name.[u] The committees were appointed by both houses to search the records of parliament, for precedents relative to the mode of proceeding in trials by impeachment; and the necessary orders were made for their accommodation in Westminster hall, for the admission of spectators, the attendance of witnesses, and other matters respecting the regularity of their proceeding. On the thirteenth of February the trial commenced with the usual formalities.[x] Mr. Hastings being called into court, the lord chancellor addressed him in the following terms:

"Warren Hastings,

"You stand at the bar of this court, charged with "high crimes and misdemeanors; a copy of which has "been delivered to you: you have been allowed counsel, "and a long time has been given you for your defence; "but this is not to be considered as a particular indul- "gence to you, as it arises from the necessity of the case; "the crimes with which you are charged, being stated to

u Mr Francis at this time, in a very able speech, entered into an account of his conduct respecting Mr. Hastings, for the last thirteen years, both in India and in England; which, though in some degree individual justification, contains much important statement and remark on the general subject concerning which the differences existed. Mr. Francis and Mr. Hastings having fought a duel, and the former gentleman having been dangerously wounded, they had exchanged forgiveness; in what sense that forgiveness was to be interpreted, Mr. Francis explained in the following passage:—"It was my lot to be dangerously wounded: as I conceived immediate death inevitable, I thought of nothing but to die in peace with all men, particularly Mr Hastings. I called him to me, gave him my hand, and desired him to consider in what situation my death would leave him. By that action, and by those words, undoubtedly I meant to declare, that I freely forgave him the insult he had offered me, and the fatal consequence which had attended it. I meant that we should stand in the same relation to each other, as if the duel and the cause of it had never happened. But did I tell him that, if I survived, I would renounce the whole plan and principle of my public life? That I would cease to oppose his measures? On my return to England, I found that a parliamentary inquiry into the late transactions in India was already begun, and I was almost immediately ordered to attend one of the committees employed upon that inquiry. Could I without treachery to the public, refuse to give evidence or information necessary for the public service when it was demanded of me by the authority of the house of commons?" See parliamentary debates.

x The house of commons, about eleven o'clock, preceded by the managers of the impeachment, who were led by Mr Burke, came from their own house into the hall. The lords, half an hour after, entered from the house of peers; first official attendants on the house in a rising series, commencing with the clerks, and terminating with the judges; afterwards the peers, beginning with the junior barons, and ending with the prince of Wales.

"have been committed in a distant place. These charges "contain the most weighty allegations, and they come "from the highest authority: this circumstance, however, "though it carries with it the most serious importance, "is not to prevent you from making your defence in a "firm and collected manner; in the confidence that, as a "British subject, you are entitled to, and will receive, "full justice from a British court." Mr. Hastings answered:

"My lords,

"I AM come to this high tribunal, equally impressed "with a confidence of my own integrity, and in the justice "of the court before which I stand."

THE two first days being employed in reading the charges, the third was appointed for opening the same, stating the nature and quality of the imputations, the evidence by which they were to be supported, and the guilt which, to the defendant, if they were proved, would attach. Never had an inquiry of more magnitude been instituted before a judicial assembly. The question was, whether a man to whom a trust affecting the happiness or misery of millions had been delegated, in the discharge of his office, had been a faithful or unfaithful trustee to his employers, the protector or the scourge of the immense and populous regions committed to his care? The question derived a very high additional importance from the character of the accused, whom friends, enemies, and impartial men, concurred in deeming a person of the most powerful and comprehensive talents; from the character of the accuser, whom friends, enemies, and impartial men, concurred in esteeming a person of the most extraordinary genius, multifarious knowledge, and splendid eloquence, that had ever graced a British senate. The anxiety of the public to hear Mr. Burke speak upon so vast a subject, against Mr. Hastings, brought an immense concourse of hearers to the hall.

Speech of Mr. Burke.

THE court was assembled to the number of one hundred and sixty-four peers, and the chancellor having called the managers to proceed, Mr. Burke rose and said, that he stood forth by order of the commons of Great Britain, to support the charge of high crimes and misdemeanors which

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they had exhibited against Warren Hastings, esq.; and that he had a body of evidence to produce to substantiate the whole and every part of those charges. The gentlemen who were joined with him in supporting the impeachment, had instructed him to open the cause with an account of the grounds on which the commons had proceeded; a general view of the nature of the crimes alleged; and with an explanation of concomitant circumstances that were necessary to elucidate the accusation. The dreadful disorders of our Indian government were acknowledged; it was not till after every mode of legislative prevention had been tried without effect, till they found, during a course of fourteen years, that inquiries and resolutions and laws were equally disregarded, that they had recourse to a penal prosecution. The crimes imputed were not errors of human frailty, nor the effects of imperious necessity; they originated in the worst passions, and evinced a total extinction of moral principle: they were committed against advice, supplication and remonstrance, and in defiance of the direct commands of lawful authority. The accused was the first in rank, station and power, under whom as the head all the peculation and tyranny of India was embodied, disciplined and paid; and in striking at whom, therefore, they would strike at the whole corps of delinquents. The evidence, which supported the charges, in many instances amounted to the clearness and precision required by the English law; but a considerable part did not reach municipal accuracy. The prosecutor contended, that it was a right of the house of commons, in an impeachment, not to be bound by the confined rules and maxims of evidence prevalent in the lower courts; nor by any other than those of natural, immutable and substantial justice.[y] This mode of interpretation was due to suffering nations, who were unconcerned in our technical distinctions, but on the great principle of morality wished punishment to follow guilt. It was highly necessary to prevent the disgraceful impu-

y This doctrine, that the rank and dignity of the assertor constituted a just ground of difference in the criterion of proof, is certainly not logically accurate: neither would it be politically wise, that the quality of the accuser should affect the requisite testimony, as in a criminal case there would be a substitution of authority for proof, which might subject liberty, property, and life, to arbitrary caprice.

tation[z] which might fall either upon that high court, as if it were corrupted by the wealth of India, or upon the laws of England, as impotent in the means of punishing successful fraud and oppression. Descending from preliminary observations to the actual subject of the charge, he stated the relations in which Mr. Hastings stood, and the duties which from these he had incurred; in order to prove his transgressions. The powers delegated to Mr. Hastings by the India company, and which he was charged with having abused, were derived from two sources; the charter bestowed by the crown, under the authority of parliament, and the grant from the mogul emperor of the Dewannee, or high stewardship of Bengal, in the year 1766. He exhibited an historical account of the company from its first establishment, the powers which it had delegated to Mr. Hastings, and which Mr. Burke charged him with having abused. He next proceeded to the rights with which the company were invested by the mogul emperor, to the collection of the revenue delegated by the company to Mr. Hastings, and which he also charged him with having grossly violated. The alleged violation of duties so originating, and abuses of powers delegated for such general and specified purposes, Mr. Burke represented with an eloquence which so astonished and agitated every hearer of fancy or sensibility, as for a considerable time to preclude the exertion of that judgment that could distinguish pictures from realities. Having exhibited Mr. Hastings as a monster of flagitiousness and crimes, he concluded with a peroration which described the nature of the cause, accusation, accused, accuser and tribunal, in all their constituent parts, and closed with the following words: "Therefore it was with confidence ordered by the "commons, that I impeach Warren Hastings, esq. of high "crimes and misdemeanors: I impeach him in the name "of the commons of Great Britain in parliament assembled, "whose parliamentary trust he has betrayed:

z This argument proceeded on a supposition, that the high court was to be influenced by the fear of censure from misapprehension, instead of giving judgment according to the merits of the case.

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"I impeach him in the name of all the commons "of Great Britain, whose national character he has "dishonoured.

"I impeach him in the name of the people of India "whose laws, rights and liberties he has subverted, whose "properties he has destroyed, whose countries he has laid "waste and desolate."

Such were the grounds adduced by the orator in a speech which occupied three hours for four days successively. Mr. Burke having concluded his account of the substance, Mr. Fox addressed the court on the mode of the charges: he stated, that the committee proposed to open and adduce evidence which should substantiate one charge at a time; to hear the prisoner's defence and evidence upon that charge, and afterwards to reply; and to proceed in the same manner in all the other articles. Mr. Hastings's counsel being asked if they consented to this mode? replied in the negative. The manner proposed was, they said, contrary to the practice of all courts of justice, and was inconsistent with all principles of equity. After some debate it was resolved, that, according to the usual practice on trials, the prosecutor should complete his case before the accused commenced his defence. Mr. Fox opened the Benares charge, which he brought down to the expulsion of Cheyt Sing; the following part was finished by Mr. Grey: Mr. Anstruther conducted the examination of evidence, and summed up the whole of that article. Mr. Adam, on the fifteenth of April, opened the second accusation respecting the begums: Mr. Sheridan examined the witnesses and summed up the charge; the last that came before the court during that session of parliament.

Motion for the impeachment of sir Elijah Impey.

ANOTHER accusation of Indian delinquency was brought before the commons in the conduct of sir Elijah Impey. This task was undertaken by sir Gilbert Elliot, who, in a very able and eloquent speech, maintained two general principles; that India must be redressed or lost, and that the only means left of reforming Indian abuse, was the punishment, in some great and signal instances, of Indian delinquency: he stated the nature, the occasion, and the purposes of the commission with which sir Elijah Impey went out to India, as involving circumstances which

were strong aggravations of his guilt, and increased the necessity of its punishment; that in the two grand objects which were committed to his charge, the protection of the company from the frauds of its servants, and of the natives from the oppression of Europeans, he had, by corruptly changing sides, added his new powers to the very force they were intended to control, and taken an active part in the oppressions which it was his duty to have avenged. Sir Gilbert Elliot presented to the house six distinct articles of accusation.

The subject of the first was the trial and execution of Nundcomar; the second, the defendant's conduct in a certain Patna cause; the third, entitled *extension of jurisdiction*, comprehended various instanees, in which the jurisdiction of the court was alleged to have been exercised illegally and oppressively, beyond the intention of the act and charter; the fourth charge, entitled the Cossijurah cause, though also an allegation of illegal assumption, was distinguished (according to the statement of the accuser) by circumstances so important, as to become properly the subject of a separate article; the fifth charge was for his acceptance of the office of judge of the Sudder Dewannee Adaulut, which was contrary to law, and not only repugnant to the spirit of the act and charter, but fundamentally subversive of all its material purposes; the sixth and last charge related to his conduct in the provinces of Oude and Benares, where the chief justice was said to have become the agent and tool of Mr. Hastings in the alleged oppression and plunder of the begums.

Sir Elijah Impey on his defence contended, that in the acts which were charged he had not exceeded the powers intrusted to him as supreme judge. Respecting the first and most important article, the trial and execution of Nundcomar for forgery, he had been accused of extrajudicial interference. Neither Nundcomar (it was contended by sir Gilbert Elliot) nor the person whose name was forged, were subject to the jurisdiction of the English court. By the laws of India, forgery is not punishable capitally; and thus a man was put to death by a court to which he was not amenable, for a crime not capital by the laws to which he was amenable. Sir Elijah Impey argued,

[illegible]

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that though the authority of the supreme court did extend over all the inhabitants of the English possessions in India, it included the inhabitants of Calcutta. Nuncomar had not been tried as a native of Bengal, but as an inhabitant of Calcutta, where he resided, and in the course he was amenable to the laws of the place. A motion being made in the house, resolved into a committee, that the first charge exhibited against sir Elijah Impey contained matter of impeachment, it was negatived by a majority of seventy-three to fifty-five; and the other charges were voted, that the other charges should not be taken into consideration.

Mr. Grenville's bill for improving his father's law respecting contested elections.

This year Mr. Grenville proposed certain amendments and additions to the bill brought into parliament by his father, for the better regulation of the trial of controverted elections. When the existing act had been proposed, Mr. Grenville said its principal aim was to take the trials of elections out of their hands, and place them in a committee so constituted, likely to do equal justice to the parties. That object, it was universally allowed, had been fully answered; but collateral inconveniencies had been incurred, which, intent on the main object, the author had overlooked. Ever since the bill had passed into a law, an infinite number of petitions, complaining of undue elections, had been presented in the first session of every parliament; and many of them, after having taken up much of the time of the house, had proved frivolous. To prevent the interruption of public business, he proposed that the committee empowered to determine whether the election petition presented, or the defence offered in answer to it, was frivolous, should adjudge the payment of costs against the party to blame. This was merely an act of justice; yet such a regulation would save much expence to individuals, and much time and trouble to the house. The present was the most proper season for considering and determining such a subject, as there was actually no petition concerning elections before the house, and the minds of members were therefore perfectly cool and open to impartial deliberation. The bill was introduced, passed both houses without opposition, and received the royal assent

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1788. Supplies.

On the sixth of May, the financial plan for the year was proposed by Mr. Pitt. The minister observed, that several extraordinary expenses had been necessarily incurred; in the navy there was an increase beyond the peace establishment of 446,000l.; in the army of 233,000l.; and in the ordnance of 61,000l. These augmented demands were occasioned by the circumstances of our putting the distant possessions of the country into a state of more complete defence, and were not to be considered as the permanent necessary expenses of the nation; and to these there were several sums to be added, which could not occur again, or at least could not make a part of our settled yearly expense: such was the sum for the relief of the loyalists, the expense of the late armament, and the vote for the payment of the debts of his royal highness the prince of Wales; these demands added together amounted to 1,282,000l. which was to be considered as extraordinary, and consequently to be deducted from the settled regular establishment of the country. It had been deemed wise to put every part of the British dominions into such a posture of defence as to secure the blessings of peace. Notwithstanding the extraordinary expenses incurred, the receipts of the country had fully answered even unforeseen demands, without deviating from the plan which the legislature had adopted for diminishing the national debt. When such were the savings in a year of unusual expense, as our resources were fast increasing in the extension of commerce, and the improvement of revenue, we might most fairly infer that our financial concerns were in a state of progressive melioration: it might be well argued from probable causes, that such a country as England, blessed with peace, must rapidly increase in the various constituents of prosperity; that she did so, was ascertained from fact and experience: he had formed an estimate from an average of four years: the revenue of 1783 amounted to ten millions, besides the land and malt tax: the revenue of 1787, with the same exclusion, amounted to thirteen millions; the additional imposts had not exceeded a million and a half; hence the other million and a half must have arisen from the suppression of smuggling, and extension of trade: he was

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about seen to adopt farther regulations for the restrictions of fraud, and commerce was very fast rising, so that he augured a much greater excess of receipt beyond expenditure. Mr. Sheridan, with an ingenuity that evidently surpassed his investigation of financial details, endeavoured to controvert the ministerial statements, but did not succeed. The supplies granted this year were eighteen thousand seamen, and about twenty thousand landmen, besides those who were on foreign service; no new taxes were imposed, but a lottery was appointed. The various departments of duty occupied parliament until the eleventh of July, when the houses were prorogued by a speech from the throne. His majesty thanked the legislature for their uniform and diligent attention to the laborious services of the present year. To the house of commons he expressed peculiar gratitude for the readiness and liberality with which they had granted the requisite supplies. Hostilities had commenced between the imperial sovereigns and Turkey, but he received the strongest assurances from the respective powers of their amicable dispositions to this country. The security and welfare of his own dominions, and the preservation of the general tranquillity of Europe, were the objects of engagements which he had recently formed with the king of Prussia and the states general.

CHAP. XL.

Affairs of the continent.—Objects of imperial combination.—Catharine prepares to visit the Crimea.—Attempts to seduce the christian subjects of Turkey.—At Cherson she meets her confederate Joseph.—State of the Turkish empire.—Commotions in Egypt.—Reasons which disposed Turkey to strike the first blow.—Treaty of the pacha with the Mamelukes.—Catharine proposes extensive cessions by Turkey to Russia, as the only means of securing peace.—Turkey indignantly rejects these claims;—declares war against Russia.—Manifesto.—Counter manifesto of Russia.—Joseph II. without any provocation joins Russia against the Turks.—Mighty preparations.—Manifesto of the emperor.—Commencement of the campaign.—The emperor takes the field.—Generous indignation of the Ottomans against the imperial aggressor.—Wise and skilful conduct of the vizier.—Military reforms of the emperor.—Injudicious and precipitate, they disgust his soldiers.—Operations ineffectual.—Obliged to act on the defensive.—The Turks overrun the Bannat.—Dismay seizes the imperial armies.—Operations of Russia.—Effect of the aggressive confederacy on neighbouring states,—on Great Britain.—Britain resumes her character of the protector of Europe.—Thwarts the imperious designs of Catharine.—Russians capture Oczakow.—State of Sweden.—Interference of Catharine in the internal affairs of Sweden.—Attempts to stir up revolt against Gustavus.—The king resents this conduct.—War.—Military and naval operations.—Refractory spirit of Gustavus's officers.—Defensive confederacy between Britain, Prussia, and the states general.—Principles of this treaty.—Different views of Messrs. Fox and Pitt on this scheme of alliance.—Internal occurrences.—Retirement of lord Mansfield from the king's bench.—Momentous improvements during his judicial supremacy, especially in mercantile law.—Strict and

liberal interpreters of the law have their respective advantages and disadvantages.—Lord Mansfield of the latter kind.—Principle of his decisions in undefined and unprecedented cases.—The Justinian of English commercial law.—General character.

CHAP. XL.

1788. Affairs of the continent.

THE attention of Europe was at this time principally occupied by the conduct and operations of the eastern powers. The confederacy between Austria and Russia, originating in the causes and directed to the objects which have been already commemorated, had been long engaged in maturing its plans. Ever since the conquest of the Crimea, Catharine was occupied in desultory war with the Tartar tribes, adjoining her frontiers. Immensely superior as the Russians were in force and discipline to these hordes, yet rapid irruptions annoyed those who could have easily repelled regular warfare. Catharine proposed either to conciliate the hostile Tartars by proffered kindness, to dazzle them by displayed magnificence, or to intimidate them by manifested power. The reduction, however, or pacification of these hordes was but a small part of the mighty designs, to promote which she deemed it expedient to visit her late acquisition, the Cherson. This journey, planned in 1786, was executed in 1787, but before that time the Tartars produced a change in her original intention. As soon as the intended progress was known, and its believed object was reported, instead of either dazzling or terrifying the Tartars, it became a signal of general and immediate danger, to cement their union in the strongest manner, and urge them to the greatest possible exertion, and determined resistance. Catharine diminished a considerable part of her destined splendor, when not likely to answer her purpose, and a great portion of her military force, which, in the war with the Tartars, could be so much more usefully employed elsewhere; she still had various purposes to accomplish; by visiting the confines of her own and the Turkish empire. She had employed by her agents very skilful, incessant, and extensive efforts, to seduce the christian

Objects of the imperial combination.

Catharine prepares to visit the Crimea.

She attempts to seduce the christian subjects of Turkey.

a History of the reign of Catharine, vol. ii. book x.

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subjects of the Ottoman Porte. Mistress of the principal country in which the Grecian faith prevails, she had declared herself the friend and protectress of the Greek church in all parts of the world; her partisans were very numerous in the heart of the Turkish empire, and she did not doubt, by a near approach, to stimulate their zeal, and rouse them to schemes of ready cooperation.[b] Aware of the imbecility of her son and heir, she had rested the hopes of talents, similar to her own, on the puerile promise of her two grandsons. The second of these princes received the name of Constantine, was dressed and educated from his childhood according to the manner of the Greeks, and always attended by a guard of Grecian youth, who were formed into a corps for that purpose: in short, she endeavoured to excite the wishes and hopes of the Greek christians, that the empire of the east should be restored under a prince who bore the name of its founder. This youth she proposed to carry with her to the frontiers of Turkey, but indisposition prevented his attendance: she farther designed to inspect her new dominions, to estimate their value, both as actual possessions, and the means of farther acquisition. While the empress thus pursued her grand project, she was anxious to concert measures with Joseph, at once her confederate and tool; and for that purpose invited him to meet her at Cherson: the king of Poland too was present at this congress. Though Stanislaus was far from being able to yield active assistance to the confederates, yet, by the position of his kingdom he could afford the two empires important aid against the Ottomans, by enabling them to unite their force, and act in perfect concert along the whole line of frontier belonging to European Turkey. At this congress the system of aggression appears to have been completely adjusted, although farther preparations were resolved before it should actually commence.

At Cherson she meets her confederate Joseph.

Meanwhile, report had carried to Constantinople the intended progress to the Cherson, and had represented with her usual exaggeration the superb splendor which was originally designed. Catharine, it was said, was about

[b] See Annual Register, 1787.

CHAP. XI. 1783.

to be crowned empress of Taurida, and to be declared protectress or autocratrix of the nations of Tartary. A christian was, by ostentatious triumph, to insult mussulman men, whom she had outraged by usurpation. Were Turks so degenerate from their ancestors, as to suffer such insolence and spoliations with impunity? Were those Ottomans who had kept the whole christian world in awe, now to be trampled by a power, till within this century scarcely known in Europe? These considerations influenced the Turks to hostilities, in which they might have appeared precipitate, if it had not been evident that they speedily either must attack or be attacked themselves. War was now undoubtedly, the purpose of Catharine and Joseph: the question, therefore, with the Turks was, which was the wisest time for commencement? Various circumstances in the situation of the Turkish empire were unfavourable to war: in the northern part of the grand seignior's territories the influence of the Russians was not only generally great, but conspiracies were with strong reason suspected to have been formed by the governors of the three principal provinces, Moldavia and Wallachia, to join the combined empires. In the east the prince of Georgia had renounced his allegiance, and even made successful inroads into Asia Minor. The Persians attempted hostilities on the side of Bassora. In the south, the turbulent beys involved Egypt in civil commotions.[d] These insurrections were believed to have been fomented by the Russian consul at Alexandria, and were headed by Mourad Bey, a Mameluke chieftain. The dreadful contests almost desolated that fertile country before any assistance could arrive from Constantinople. Hassan Bey, the grand admiral of the Turkish empire, being consulted, formed a project for not only crushing the present insurrection, but annihilating as a separate class, the Mamelukes, whose ferocity and rapacity had so long oppressed and plundered Egypt; and for this purpose to extinguish the order of the beys which had headed and directed these outrages. When this essential resolution should be effected, he intended to divide the country into five distinct govern-

State of the Turkish empire.

Commotions in Egypt.

c Annual Register, 1786. d See Annual Register 1786, chap. viii.

ments, under the immediate authority of the Porte, and all the officers of its new appointment. An armament, comprehending two strong fleets, twenty thousand land forces, with a train of artillery, plentifully supplied with stores and provisions, and equipt with equal secresy and despatch, arrived at Rosetta before the rebellious beys had entertained the smallest conception of such a design. The pacha immediately marched against the Mamelukes, waiting to receive him with a more numerous army. After being repeatedly superior, he gained one decisive victory at Grand Cairo, made himself master of all lower Egypt, compelled the rebel chieftains to fly into upper, and was preparing to pursue them into those regions, with the confident expectation of completely accomplishing his design. The situation of the beys now appeared desperate, and another year probably would have enabled the pacha to overthrow the Mameluke power. Should hostilities commence with Russia and Germany, the whole force of Turkey must be exerted against these formidable enemies; the pacha and his army must be immediately recalled: a declaration of war, therefore, was a necessary dereliction of the pacha's project, when it was about to be crowned with complete success. On this view, policy appeared to dictate that war should, if possible, be deferred; on the other hand, besides the general advantage from striking the first blow, there were special reasons of considerable weight for anticipating the certain intentions of the christian empires. Catharine, conceiving the time of beginning the war to depend upon herself and her ally, had not been hasty in preparation, and was at present chiefly occupied in providing for her own security in the north and west, before she, with her confederate, proceeded to invade the security of her neighbour in the south and east. Engaged in negotiation with the powers in the western vicinity of her capital, and not intending to go to war during that campaign, she had suffered her military equipments to proceed slowly. Her finances were by no means in a condition favourable to the increased demands of hostilities; she had been greatly exhausted by the former war: and though her projects and improvements might ultimately tend to enrich her country, yet her establishments, both for splen-

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dor and for force, together with her profuse largesses to her favourites,[e] or at their instance, were extremely expensive; and her present expenditure actually exceeded her present income.

Reasons which disposed Turkey to strike the first blow.

The sultan had beheld with most indignant resentment the ambitious usurpation of Russia; from her invasion of the Crimea, he appealed with success to his subjects, both as Turks and mussulmen, on the treatment which he had received; he aroused their patriotism, and their religious enthusiasm; animated by such incentives, he trusted that their native courage would operate, and that the ability of the pacha, aided and supported by other officers, would give it discipline and direction: the western powers, he not only inferred from their policy, but knew from their assurances, would interest themselves in a contest so materially affecting the balance of Europe, which they had ever been so anxious to preserve. The vast accession of treasure from the capture of Cairo, the depository of Mameluke riches in addition to their usual revenue, placed the Turkish finances in a flourishing state. From the situation of his enemy, the state of his own resources, and, beyond all, the spirit which diffused itself through his people, notwithstanding the successes of his armies in Egypt, he resolved immediately to withdraw them from the south, and employ them in striking the first blow against the autocratrix of the north. The grand pacha, hearing from Constantinople that his talents and military force might be required elsewhere, lamented the cause but did not repine at the order: and since he could no longer hope to subvert the Mamelukes, endeavoured to avail himself, as much as possible, of the advantages which they must still retain. In these circumstances he discovered political ability not inferior to his military; he cautiously concealed both his intention of leaving Egypt and its cause, and intimated to the beys, that, though, as they themselves must be sensible, his power was able to effect their speedy destruction, yet his master and he would more willingly dispense pardon than punishment. The Mamelukes gladly listened to these overtures, and

Treaty of the pacha with the Mamelukes.

[e] Memoirs of Catharine, *passim*. [f] See Annual Register, 1788, chap.

entered into a negotiation, in which the pacha so completely wrought upon their fears, that he compelled them to purchase, with their still remaining treasures, the forbearance of a war which he had previously determined to abandon. Hassan, having thus despoiled and reduced the revolters, returned to Constantinople with such treasures as had not been brought thither for many years, and were alone sufficient to invigorate all the preparations for war. The conduct of the Russian ministers at the Turkish capital since the last peace, had been haughty and imperious, without exciting any strong expressions of resentment on the part of the Ottomans. Bulgakow, the ambassador, having been called to attend his mistress at Cherson, on his return repeated a set of propositions[g] which were laid down by the empress as the basis of a new treaty, and as the only means of establishing on a permanent footing the tranquillity of both empires. The general principle of the proposed contract was, the most extensive and important cessions to Russia by Turkey, without any equivalent; indeed a surrender of a great part of a territory. So dictatorial and insolent a proposal was immediately rejected: the divan, not satisfied with this absolute refusal, proposed a set of conditions, not only as the basis of a treaty, but as the only means for preserving peace. The leading article was the restoration of the Crimea, that had been usurped by Russia, with others of a similar nature; and producing a written instrument, which contained the proffered terms, they required the Russian to sign them on the spot. Bulgakow declared his incapability of subscribing any conditions, without express orders from his mistress, and de-

Catharine proposes extensive cessions by Turkey to Russia, as the only means of securing peace.

Turkey indignantly rejects those claims,

g They included, besides the admission of a Russian consul at the port of Varna, within a hundred and twenty miles of Constantinople, which had long been an object of much solicitude, a total renunciation of the sovereignty of Georgia: which, as that ill defined denomination of territory might be extended to all the neighbouring countries, as well as to Mingrelia, would have afforded sanction to all the past and future encroachments of Russia on that side. Another proposed condition, and still harder to be admitted, was a new settlement of the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, by which their governors, generally called in Europe princes, were to hold them by hereditary succession, and in a great measure independent of the Porte. But the most singular claim, perhaps, of any, was that upon Bessarabia, which, as having once belonged to the Tartar khans, Russia now demanded; a principle of no very limited operation, and which, if pursued to its full length, would have made the usurpation of the Crimea a lawful title to all the conquests of Tamerlane. Annual Register, 1788, p. 9.

1787.

sired time for receiving instructions concerning the articles: but respecting the Crimea, he acquainted him he could not venture to mention such a proposal to his sovereign; and that he well knew, in no fortune, and in no circumstances whatever, could she ever be induced to relinquish the sovereignty of that country. A barbarous custom prevailed under Turkish ignorance and despotism of imprisoning foreign ambassadors on a rupture with their principals; accordingly, Bulgakow was confined in a castle with seven towers, allotted to alleged offenders against the state: but he was treated with much indulgence than former captives in such circumstances had there experienced. Two days after, on the eighteenth of August 1787, war was declared against Russia. The manifesto presented to the christian ambassadors, [illegible] the good faith[h] and the strict attention to the terms of the treaty of Kainardgi, which the grand seignior had so formerly observed; and so this conduct contrasted the continual violation of the most solemn conventions by Russia. The empress had instigated the prince of Georgia to rebellion, and supported him by her troops against the Ottoman his sovereign: she had deprived the inhabitants of Oczakow of the benefit of the salt mines, which not only from time immemorial had been open to them, but which were expressly stipulated by treaty to be held in common by both nations. Russia, through her agents, had endeavoured to corrupt and seduce the subjects of the Porte: she constantly interfered in the internal policy of the Turkish empire, and presumed to dictate to the sultan, insomuch that when the pachas, governors, or judges by a faithful discharge of their duty, displeased her, she arrogantly demanded their removal or punishment. The complaints in the manifesto respecting commerce were equally numerous; and the whole detail endeavoured to establish, and in many cases with success, a spirit of encroachment, rapacity, usurpation, and insolence, on the part of Russia. The court of Petersburgh had regarded Turkey with so much contempt, as to entertain not only no apprehension, but no idea that they would commence hos-

and declares war against Russia. Manifesto.

h See State Papers, August 24, 1788.

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tilities, and received the manifesto with astonishment. The counter manifesto[1] was expressed in that lofty style which Russia had used since the peace of Kainardgi; and representing Turkey as holding all which she possessed by her merciful bounty exercised at that treaty: it repeated her former justification of her conduct respecting the Crimea, and, vindicating in detail her own acts, endeavoured in the usual tenor of such productions, or where argument was wanting, by bold assertion to throw the blame upon her adversary. As the season of 1787 was so far advanced before hostilities began, no very important operations took place. The Turks made several attempts on Russian fortresses, but were not successful. The Russians contented themselves with defensive efforts; reserving offensive exertions for the next campaign. During the winter the French and Spanish ambassadors made several attempts to mediate between the belligerent powers, and to procure an armistice. The grand vizier declared the proposal to be totally inadmissible, from its affording every advantage to Russia, and none to the Porte: their perfidious enemy, whose rapacity and ambition were insatiable, would gladly put them off their guard, and amuse them with a negotiation, until her preparations were complete. The Porte now demanded of the Imperial ambassador, what part his master intended to take in the war? That minister, having applied for the emperor's instructions, answered by his prince's directions, that his Imperial majesty, as the friend and ally of Russia, was bound by treaty to furnish her with eighty thousand men, in case of war; that if the Porte should consider this engagement as an act of hostility, he was prepared to abide the consequences; but, on the contrary, if they should choose to maintain the good understanding which subsisted between the two empires, he would with pleasure undertake the office of mediator, in order to prevent the effusion of blood.

Counter manifesto of Russia.

Joseph II. without provocation joins Russia against Turkey.

GREAT preparations were made in all parts of the emperor's dominions: four armies were ordered to be assembled; one at Carlstadt in Croatia, under the com-

[1] See State Papers, Sept. 13, 1787.

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His mighty preparations.

Manifesto of the emperor.

mand of general de Vins; another at Peterwaradin in Hungary, commanded by general Langlois; a third on the borders of Lithuania, under general Febris; and the fourth in the Buccowine, headed by the prince of Saxe-Coburg. On the tenth of February 1788, the emperor declared war against Turkey; in his manifesto[k] there is not a single sentence asserting the least ground of complaint from Austria on her own account; the whole pretext is, that the Porte had not acceded to the reasonable requisitions of the empress of Russia, and had maltreated her envoy; that by this conduct the Porte had manifested hostile disposition to the emperor, who was in alliance with the empress of Russia. "The Porte (says this manifesto) "were not unacquainted with the strict bonds of amity and "alliance which unite the courts of Vienna and Peters-"burgh: of this occurrence they were informed, as well "by verbal insinuation, as by a memorial presented towards "the close of the year 1783. This was accompanied with "an energetic representation of the nature of this alliance, "and the danger of encountering its force: the Ottoman "court have, therefore, themselves only to blame, if the "emperor, after being for many years employed in the "preservation of peace, and in his endeavours to live with "them on the best terms, and after having seized upon every "opportunity of amicable intervention, finds himself at "length obliged by their conduct to comply with his "engagements to the empress, and take a part in the war "into which she finds herself so forcibly drawn." Such were the principles of morals exhibited in the emperor's declared reasons for a rupture with the Turks, from whom he did not allege that either he or his subjects had received the slightest provocation. He went to war with an unoffending nation, and plunged his own country in all the evils of hostilities, that he might fight the battles of the empress of Russia.

Commencement of the campaign.

BEFORE his declaration, he began his enmity by an ineffectual attempt to surprise Belgrade, which believed itself to be still in a state of peace: six chosen regiments of imperial infantry were, at a season of peace, despatched

k See State Papers, Feb. 10, 1788.

in two divisions to attack this fortress: by some failure in the time and place of rendezvous, the one body did not arrive speedily enough to assist the other: the first detachment formed under the fire of the garrison and town, without any prospect of being joined by the second. The Turkish governor was well prepared for their reception, and with great coolness sent a polite message to the Austrian commander, expressing his surprise at seeing, in a season of profound peace, such an appearance of troops on their territory, and in the precincts of a fortified city; only requiring farther to know the cause or motive of their coming. The Austrian leader answered, that hearing a party of Turks was preparing to surprise the neighbouring city of Semlin, he had advanced to counteract their scheme; but that, finding himself mistaken, he would withdraw his troops. Though the excuse was accepted, yet conscious of their own intentions, and afraid that the moderation of the Turks was only affected, the Imperialists crossed the Saave with great precipitation, and lost a considerable number of men. An attempt of the same kind was, before the termination of the peace, made by the Austrians upon the frontier fortress of Turkish Gradisca: this place they endeavoured to take by assault, but were repulsed with the loss of at least five hundred men killed and wounded.

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War being now declared, both parties made dispositions for regularly commencing the campaign. The emperor applied to the court of Warsaw for leave to pass through the Polish dominions, if requisite, in order to form a junction with the Russians. The king and permanent council replied, that they had no power to grant the passage demanded, as it entirely depended on the general diet. The emperor had intended to force a passage, if refused, but found it expedient to change his resolution. He also requested the consent of the Venetians to a Russian fleet to be received into their harbours, but his requisition was absolutely refused. Notwithstanding these disappointments, the Imperial troops took the field. The emperor joined his principal army about the middle of April, being on the south side of the Danube, and about to invest the small fortress of Schabatz in Servia. The investment was deferred until the emperor's arrival, that

The emperor takes the field.

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he might have his share of the military glory that would accrue from such an achievement. The place was obviously incapable of resistance, and was easily captured. The triumph of this victory, however, was soon balanced by a check which prince Lichtenstein's army received about the same time at Dubicza. That prince having carried on his approaches regularly against the fortress, and made a breach, which he deemed practicable, resolved to attempt it by storm. The animosity of the Turks was vehemently inflamed against the Austrians: in their estimation the emperor was an officious intermedler in quarrels which did not concern him or his territories; he endeavoured to take advantage of their recent misfortunes, and without provocation to insult and despoil those whom he conceived unable to resist his power: they considered him as invading them without even any pretence of wrong, or any other motives than those of a robber and common enemy to mankind: they were inspired with generous eagerness to make so flagrant aggression recoil on the head of its author. This indignant spirit, so merited by its object, pervaded all ranks of the Turkish host; invigorated their efforts against the Imperial armies, during the whole campaign; and turned upon the offender that defeat and disaster, which he had projected against those who were doing him no wrong. The garrison of Dubicza, being reinforced before the assault was attempted, instead of waiting for the enemy, threw open their gates, and rushing out, attacked the intrenchments, forced them sword in hand, and compelled the foes to raise the siege with the loss of two thousand men.[1] The grand vizier, who commanded the principal army in Bulgaria and Silistria, was a man of very vigorous abilities: he knew the troops under his command, and the enemy with which he had to cope reviewing the history of former wars, and the relative character of the contending forces, he saw that since the art of war in christian countries had been reduced into a regular system, the Turks, devoid of discipline, were generally unsuccessful, through a prevalent impolicy of

Generous indignation of the Ottomans against the imperial aggressor.

Wise and skilful conduct of the vizier.

[1] See Annual Register, 1788, chap. ii

azarding pitched battles, which depended chiefly upon tac- cal skill; he, therefore, resolved to pursue a plan much ore adapted to his materials: fierce as the Ottomans were natural courage, stimulated by strong incentives, and ani- ated by partial successes, he was fully aware that they ere very much inferior to German discipline; he, there- ore, resolved not to hazard a general engagement, unless bsolutely necessary, but to employ the energy of his forces n attacks on posts and detachments, in which the discipline of the enemy could be of little avail. This mode of war- fare would give full scope to the qualities in which the Turks excelled, and prevent the effectual operation of those in which their enemy was so superior: he thus intended to train his troops to obedience, discipline, and military skill, to give them continual opportunities of sig- nalizing their valour in encounters with the enemy; and gradually to approach to decisive combat, as he found his forces increase in tactical knowledge and efficiency. While the inventive mind of the grand vizier was exerting itself in devising changes necessary for his object, and thus improving the means intrusted to his direction, the vision- ry fancy, and flimsy understanding of Joseph, was occu- ied in projects of reform, which tended to render his aterials worse instead of better. Applying to military bjects the same general principle which distinguished his il government, *that change is improvement*, he contrived ariety of innovations, far from being conducive to the poses of war, and really inimical to success, because disgusted his soldiers. After having profusely hed his treasures in equipping mighty armies to fight attles of another, he endeavoured to exert his economy aking hard bargains with dealers in corn and cattle, ved new modes of supplying his troops with necessa- and by these reforms reduced his armies, before the of the campaign, to the greatest scarcity, distress, nsequently discontent.[m]

Military reforms of the empe- ror.

Injudicious and precipitate they disgust his soldiers.

E first considerable battle which took place after a, arose from an attack made by the Turks on the f Saxe Coburg; and though, after a furious con-

m See Annual Register 1788.

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test, they were repulsed by the arrival of an Austrian reinforcement, yet they, being joined by fresh troops, renewed the engagement: for several successive days they fought with various fortune; but the Turks astonished the Austrians by their furious valour: with their spears they did not fear to meet hand to hand, the enemy with their guns and bayonets, and showed themselves unappalled by the formidable artillery to which the Germans so much trusted. The Austrians had commenced the campaign with a thorough contempt of their adversaries, and a confident expectation, that the only difficulty they had to encounter would be from the speed of the enemy's flight, but they now underwent a total change of opinion and sentiment and by a natural transition regarded their foes as the most terrible of mankind. Dislike to the war against an enemy who had been so much mistaken, and discontent on account of the emperor's innovations, was strongly enhanced by the resentment which they entertained against the Russians for not cooperating with the Austrian efforts. the emperor himself was irritated at the commencement of the war, so different from his sanguine hopes, and, indeed confident declarations, and determined to venture on an exploit which had been held out as the first object of the campaign; this was the siege of Belgrade; he accordingly adopted measures for speedily carrying the project into execution. The vizier, with an army of eighty thousand men, advanced to the relief of this most important fortress: and occupied a strong position, covered by the Danube in front, Belgrade and the Saave on the left, the fortress of Orsova on his right, and garrisons on his rear. The Imperial army, instead of persevering in their design upon Belgrade, returned to Semlin; and the invaders acted avowedly upon the defensive: various encounters took place, in which great numbers were slain on both sides; but the loss of the Austrians was the greater. Besides war, the Germans had to contend with a still more dreadful enemy in a pestilential fever, very frequent in the Danubian lower provinces, and most destructive to armies which come from higher and more healthy countries; the inactive indolence, under which the grand army languished at Semlin, added to this distemper: as the season advanced to the

His operations are ineffectual.

Obliged to act on the defensive.

sickliness of autumn, the mortality became more dreadful; and before the close of the campaign, at least the half of one of the finest armies that ever marched from the Austrian dominions, without performing a single exploit of any note, perished, partly by the sword, but chiefly by disease.

On the side of the Buccovine, where the prince of Coburg, commanded, the war languished in the beginning of the campaign, from the failure of the Russians in effecting a junction. The object of the confederates on that side was to invest the fortress of Choczim; and a body of Russian forces arriving, at length, in the beginning of July, preparations were made for the siege: the attempt was greatly facilitated by the governor of Moldavia, who, having been before corrupted by the Russians, treacherously surrendered the country on the first approach of the enemy. The combined generals conceived the reduction of Choczim would immediately follow the investment; but they were mistaken: the seraskier, who commanded the garrison, conducted his defence with such intrepidity and skill, that after undergoing the severest hardships for upwards of two months, he, at last, on the 29th of September, obtained a most honourable capitulation. The capture of Choczim closed the campaign on the frontiers of Poland. The army third in force employed by the emperor, was that which acted on the side of Croatia, and had been compelled to raise the siege of Dubicza. Prince Lichtenstein's bad health having compelled him to resign the command, he was succeeded by marshal Laudohn: under this veteran officer the Austrians, dejected by the disappointment, both of the secondary and principal armies, began to recover their vigour and confidence. Laudohn made a second attempt upon Dubicza, which after a very gallant defence he compelled to surrender: he afterwards invested the fortress of Novi, which in the month of October capitulated. He proposed to close the campaign by the reduction of Gradisco, after Belgrade, the principal fortress on the northwest frontier of Turkey, but from the strength of the place, and the autumnal rains, was compelled to raise the siege. General Fabre, with the fourth army, contended with the Turks on the borders of Tran-

CHAP. sylvania, where, being obliged to act in the defensive, after many bloody contests, he was so far successful as to prevent the enemy from penetrating into the country. The grand vizier, instead of imitating the quiescent example of the emperor's army at Semlin, was active in annoying the dominions of the invader. One of the most fertile portions of lower Hungary is the Bannat of Temiswar, divided by the Danube from the Turkish Servia, and the fortress of Belgrade. The vizier made bridges over the river, and sent great detachments, that he might either desolate and despoil so rich a tract of the enemy's country, or compel the emperor to leave Semlin for the protection of the Bannat, and thus expose his enfeebled army to the continual attacks of the Turkish cavalry, in a dry, firm, and open country. The Bannat is a tract, which, from the strength of its capital, and its vicinity to the strong posts in the mountains of Transylvania, is extremely difficult to be conquered; but having no other fortress of note, beside Temiswar, it is easy to be overrun by any army that commands the field, and is secure on the side of the Danube: therefore the vizier wisely resolved not to attempt the conquest, which would be operose and ultimately unproductive, but to overrun the country, from which the advantage to himself would be immediate, by the extreme fertility and high cultivation of the province, and the distress to the enemy would be grievous and ruinous: he according put his design in execution, invaded the Bannat, and spread desolation wherever he went.

The Turks overrun the Bannat.

Dismay seizes the Imperial armies.

TERROR and dismay pervaded the Imperial armies and provinces, and even Vienna itself, when they found that, instead of those conquests for which the war had been undertaken, the richest dominions of the aggressor were now seized by the defender: they conceived that instead of Constantinople, Vienna might again be the scene of attack. The emperor, as the vizier had foreseen, sent troops to the relief of his province; and a large division of the grand army was attacked by the Turks on the eighth of August, with such fury, at Orsova, near the northern bank of the Danube, that they were defeated, and a dreadful slaughter ensued. The emperor now thought it necessary to quit his camp at Semlin, and march northward

cover Temiswar, and secure his communication with his forces in Transylvania. The vizier being reinforced with large bodies of troops, closely followed his enemy : several engagements took place, in one of which the Austrians were defeated with the loss of no less than five thousand men, and were obliged to abandon their camp with terror and disorder, and the remainder of the forces took refuge in Temiswar and Transylvania. The autumnal rains having set in with uncommon violence, the vizier found, that to keep the field would be ruinous to his troops, as little inured to the extreme cold and wet, as their enemies were to the extremes of heat ; and now that he had effected his purpose of doubly annoying the foe, by despoiling his richest territory and defeating his strongest army, he recrossed the Danube, and returned to Belgrade. At Constantinople, great as was their joy for the victories of the vizier, both the people and court were much displeased with the evacuation of the Bannat. The sultan, notwithstanding his condition, so very unfavourable to either intellectual or moral excellence, was really a prince of sagacity, prudence and moderation. He perfectly comprehended the policy of his officer, its reasons and motives, and did justice to both. The emperor in November returned to Vienna ; having, for such immense expenses, and losses, of this very bloody and destructive campaign, the ruin of so valuable a province, acquired three fortresses of little significance. Such were to Joseph the first year's consequences of unprovoked aggression.

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Operations of Russia.

The preparations of the emperor had been formed in the reliance that a very strong force from Russia would cooperate with him on the Danube. Such had been the plan concerted between the Imperial courts, and such, as we have seen, the failure of the execution. The empress of Russia, in seeking the alliance of Joseph, had considered her own advantage solely, without any regard to the interest of her confederate : she deemed him a powerful tool, whom, by working on his weakness, vanity and ambition, she could apply to her own use : she had left him to promote her views at his expense, by weakening her enemy on one side, while she should direct her efforts to her own sole benefit on the other. Joseph was defeated ; and

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lavished the blood and treasure of his subjects, without any advantage to Austria; nevertheless, he thereby effectually served Russia: he employed the chief Turkish force, and by his disasters, incurred with such struggles, facilitated her acquisitions. Her first object was to enlarge and secure her possessions on the Black Sea, and to form such a body of power as could not hereafter be shaken. From the immense extent of her dominions, much time must necessarily elapse before her armies, spread through the interior country, could reach the frontiers. She, meanwhile, equipt a powerful fleet, destined for the Mediterranean, and another naval armament for the Black Sea. In the former war she had experienced no hostile opposition, from any of the maritime powers, to her plan of obtaining a footing in the Mediterranean, and was by the mistress of the ocean seconded in that scheme. Now, a different plan of policy was adopted; both the maritime and other powers of Europe regarded the confederacy between the two empires, with a jealousy which increased as its objects unfolded themselves; but principally directed against the member most powerful both in resources and in personal character, and whose aggrandizement it tended chiefly to promote. The smaller states firmly resolved not to support a combination by which they themselves might be eventually crushed; the greater determined, if necessary, to oppose a confederacy by which their own independence might be endangered: what part Prussia might take, could not be affirmed from either the declarations or conduct of that court, though it might be easily inferred from its interest. Spain and France were known both to be friendly to the preservation of the Turkish empire; and internal affairs only prevented the latter from manifesting her disposition in hostile interference. Holland was sounded on the occasion; her conduct it was foreseen, would be chiefly governed by the example of England. It became a subject of great political anxiety how England was to act in the present case: some supposed, that inspired by resentment for the hostile conduct of Russia in the armed neutrality, and her manifest indifference to friendly intercourse, more recently exhibited, she would now oppose her naval schemes:

Effect of the aggressive confederacy on the neighbouring states;

on Britain.

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others argued, that this was the time for procuring most beneficial commercial arrangements from Russia by seconding her favourite object. Those who were most thoroughly acquainted with the present British government, concluded that it would not be determined by so contemptible a motive to public conduct as resentment, but would be guided by policy; that not confining its political estimates to mere commercial gain, it would include ultimate security, and that Britain would resume her appropriate character of protector of Europe, from whatever quarter its independence and security might be endangered. England soon manifested a determination not to second Russia. The empress had employed agents to hire British ships for serving as tenders and transports to her fleet, and a considerable number was provided for that purpose, when a proclamation in the London gazette, prohibiting British seamen from entering into any foreign service, threw a fatal damp on the design. This was attended with a notice to the contractors for the tenders, that the engagement for shipping must be renounced; that the ships would not be permitted to proceed; and that government was determined to maintain the strictest neutrality during the war. In hopes of diminishing this great disappointment, Russia applied to the republic of Holland for a sufficient number of transports to answer the purpose; but that government refused to comply with the request, and also declared its resolution to maintain the strictest neutrality; and Catharine's expedition to the Mediterranean was laid aside. On the Black Sea the prince of Nassau commanded the Russian fleet, and the captain pacha the armament of Turkey. Prince Potemkin, with an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men, approached the Euxine, on the banks of the Bog. The first object of this expedition was the reduction of Oczakow, a very strong fortress near the Bog, and on the Black Sea, which, as the frontier garrison of Turkey in that quarter, was of the highest importance in her wars with Russia, but more indispensably necessary since her ambitious adversary had occupied the adjacent Crimea. The preparations of attack and defence corresponded with the value of the object. On the twelfth of July, Potemkin invest-

Britain resumes her character of protector of Europe;

and thwarts the imperious designs of Catharine.

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ed this fortress, aided by his fleet: the Turkish troops did not exceed twenty thousand men, nor, indeed, would the garrison have easily contained a greater number of defenders. During five months this gallant and intrepid band resisted the whole Russian host. In the sixth, the apparent hopelessness of effort, together with the inclemency of winter, seemed about to force the besiegers to desist from their attempt; when Potemkin, ashamed of making so little progress with so great a power, on the seventeenth of December, as the last effort, ordered a general bombardment and cannonade of the place with redhot balls to commence. One of these fell upon the grand powder magazine, which, being still amply provided, blew up with so terrible an explosion, as to demolish too great a portion of the wall to admit of the fortress being any longer tenable: the Turks still made a most desperate resistance, both in the breach, and in the streets; but they were at last overpowered, and the place was taken by storm.

The Russians capture Oczakow.

State of Sweden.

WHILE these hostilities were carrying on between the Imperial powers and the Turks in the south, war suddenly broke out against Catharine in the north. Sweden, beyond most nations, had reason to regard Russia with resentment, since by that power she had been driven from the high place which, during the seventeenth century, she had held among the powers of Europe. Fear, however, a force so enormous, had restrained the expression of resentment, and produced an apparent connexion between the two countries; and there was always at the court of Stockholm a strong and numerous party favourable to Russia. It was an uniform policy of the court of Petersburgh to govern by influence and intrigue foreign states, which they could not so easily command by power: this means of influence was carried to a much greater extent by Catharine, than by any of her predecessors. One of the chief instruments of her foreign politics, was the seduction of subjects from allegiance to princes, from whose civil dissensions she expected to derive benefit. It was, indeed, a part of her plan to weaken the executive authority in the countries which she wished to direct, that from contest there might be the more frequent occasions for her interfer-

ence.[n] As the Swedish revolution, whatever its other consequences might be, strengthened the executive government, it was very disagreeable to Catharine. Although perfectly satisfactory to the lower classes, it was and continued to be, as she well knew, extremely hateful to the aristocracy, whose peculiar privileges it had entirely destroyed; thus there was a great faction in Sweden inimical to the measures of the king; and this party Russia very constantly supported. Gustavus was thoroughly acquainted with these intrigues: the Swedish king was impressed with an idea, that the liberties of the north were exposed to imminent danger from the power and ambition of Russia, and the chief object of his policy was to secure weaker neighbours against the aspiring Catharine. These sentiments he endeavoured to communicate to Denmark, and incite that country to vigilance: meanwhile he bestowed the closest attention on the internal improvement of his own kindom, with such effect, as justified the apprehensions entertained by Russia from the Swedish change of 1772. A prompt, firm, executive government; union and decision in the cabinet, with a tolerable degree of apparent harmony between the king and the deliberative orders of the state succeeded to anarchy, weakness and discord; there was a good and amply supplied army, with an excellent fleet, and such a well regulated state of finances, as would give energy to both in case of emergency. A situation of affairs so different from the wishes of Catharine, she formed various projects for embroiling, though at the same time she heaped the strongest expressions of regard on the prince, whose government she was ardently desirous of disturbing. She professed a wish to assist, with her experience and counsels, such an illustrious pupil; invited him to Petersburgh, and actually gave him advice to introduce among his subjects innovations, which if adopted, must have rendered him unpopular. Gustavus had penetration to discern the motives of the empress; and private dislike added to public jealousy. Catharine, desirous of swaying the counsels of Sweden by her influence, was enraged with Gustavus for successfully opposing

Interference of Catharine in the internal polities of Sweden.

[n] See Memoirs of Catharine II. *passim*.

her artifices; and the Swedish monarch detested his neighbour for her endeavours to render him dependent. The design of subverting and partitioning the Ottoman empire with the vast military preparations for carrying the project into execution, could not but increase in the highest degree the apprehension and alarm of the king: he saw in the last war the inability of the Turks to combat the power of Russia only, how then could they be supposed capable now of resisting the immense combined force of both empires? If Russia was already too formidable for the repose and safety of her neighbours, how must she appear when clothed and armed in the spoil and force of the Ottoman empire. Distant and heterogeneous as the Swedes and Turks were, common interest had often before united them against Russia. The feebleness of the Swedish government, however, under Gustavus's father, and the revolutionary designs of the son had prevented either from taking a part in the preceding war. Differently circumstanced now, the king of Sweden in spring armed by land and sea. The empress pretended, and to many appeared, to disregard these preparation, and did not deign to inquire into their object. She, however, replenished her magazines and forts in Finland with ammunition, troops, and provisions: she was indefatigable in exercising her usual insidious policy to stimulate and promote dissensions between the sovereign and his subjects. She had two classes in Sweden from whom she expected cooperation in her designs against its prince: the first consisted of the ancient aristocracy, which, without any attachment to Russia, submitted to her influence, in the hopes of recovering, through her, their former constitution: the second of those who, through bribery or other inducements, had really become partisans of Russia, but pretended to adopt the views of the nobility. On the former she depended as the dupes of her schemes, which they would believe beneficial to Sweden; the latter, she knew, would be the willing and ready agents of her designs, without any regard to the interest or security of their country. Through these parties she constantly relied that she would be able to subvert the present government of Sweden, and render that nation a dependency upon Russia. While he

She attempts to stir up revolt against Gustavus.

emissaries were active in spreading dissatisfaction through Sweden, and Gustavus was persevering in his equipments, the empress ordered her ambassador to deliver a memorial to the Swedish ministry, which, in a very few pages, presents a sketch of that policy by which Catharine endeavoured to promote discord. Its manifest object was to stir up the subject to sedition and insurrection against the sovereign: it was not addressed to the king, to whom only, by the laws regulating intercourse between nations in the great European republic, it ought to have been addressed: it was directed to all ranks and classes of his subjects, with whom, by the law of nations, a foreign sovereign could have no ground of correspondence. This document professed the highest regard for the Swedes, represented the interest of the people as separate from those of the king, and the promotion of the former° as one of her principal objects. Mentioning the preparations of Gustavus, it called on the people to join the empress in preserving the public tranquillity. A memorial so openly fomenting disobedience and disloyalty, was severely resented by Gustavus, who, in an answer exposed its intent and tendency, and signified to Razouffsky, the Russian ambassador, his majesty's wish, that he should forthwith leave the Swedish dominions. Manifestoes and counter manifestoes were soon after published, detailing to other powers the alleged grounds of hostilities. Gustavus immediately repaired to Finland, in order to commence warlike operations: he himself commanded the army, and his brother, the duke of Suddermania, the fleet. Various engagements took place by sea between the Swedes and Russians, in which though the former displayed extraordinary valour, and gained several advantages, yet the Russian squadron (the same that had been intended for the Mediterranean) being much greater in force, formed, directed, and commanded by admiral Greig, a British seaman, proved superior in the result of the campaign, and was mistress of the Baltic. The king headed so gallant and strong an army, that he entertained well founded hopes of proving superior to all the Russian land forces

The king resents this conduct.

War.

Military and naval operations.

° State Papers, June 18, 1788.

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that could be spared from southern operations: but Russian intrigue he found a more formidable enemy. the constitution of Sweden it was ordained that war should not be undertaken without the consent of the states; the present hostilities had not received that sanction. Catharine had directed her policy to the representation and exposure of this unconstitutional deficiency, and with such success, that though the soldiers were eagerly devoted to Gustavus's pleasure, yet a great part of the officers, consisting of the ancient nobility and gentry, declared that they could not, without violating their consciences and their duty to their country, draw their swords in a war undertaken contrary to their country's laws: this refractory spirit rendered the campaign in Finland ineffective.

Refractory spirit of Gustavus's officers.

Defensive confederacy between Britain, Prussia, and the states general.

To counteract the imperial confederacy of aggression this year a defensive alliance was concluded between the kings of Prussia and Britain, and also these princes respectively, and the states general, by which, besides reciprocal defence, and the maintenance of the existing constitution of Holland, the contracting parties sought the general preservation of the balance of power: they guaranteed each other from any hostile attack, and engaged in concert to preserve peace and tranquillity: if the one were menaced with aggression, the other, without delay, should employ its good offices, and the most efficacious means to prevent hostilities, to procure satisfaction to the party threatened, and to settle things in a conciliatory manner: but if these applications did not produce the desired effect in the space of two months, and if one of the parties were hostilely attacked, the others undertook to defend and maintain him in all the rights and privileges, and territories, which he possessed at the commencement of hostilities. The general principle of this treaty was that wise policy dictated for British interference in continental affairs, security, and the maintenance of that order and balance on which the safety and independence of Europe rested. From the general object of the treaty, the contracting parties had, no doubt, in view the imperial confederacy, which, if its progress were not checked, had so strong a tendency to endanger the tranquillity and safety of other states. The interests of England were as essen-

Principle of this treaty.

tially concerned as those of Prussia, in preventing the ascendancy of Russia and Austria.

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Different views of Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt on this scheme of alliance.

Mr. Fox's project of continental alliance was to connect ourselves with Austria as in former times, that, should a war arise with France, such a powerful enemy might divide her attention, and prevent it from being, as in the late war, chiefly directed to maritime affairs. Mr. Pitt's plan was to form continental alliances according to existing situations: France was at present engaged in no scheme of policy, likely either to affect the general safety of Europe, or to provoke England to a war; she was, indeed, deeply occupied in plans for remedying the evils of former ambition: what system of alliance might be wise in circumstances not existing, nor likely to recur, was a question of speculation rather than immediate practicable policy. The emperor was so involved in the projects of Catharine, that an alliance with him would be difficult, and indeed impracticable, except at the expense of adopting his partialities, and seconding the attempts of Russia. In the formidable combination between these two powers, that nation became naturally the ally of Britain, which had a common interest with Britain in watching the conduct and preventing the aggrandizement of the parties; besides, Prussia, together with England, was closely connected with the constitutional party in Holland: however just, therefore, Mr. Fox's reasoning might be, if it were applied to situations that very frequently occurred in our history, yet, in the present circumstances, alliance with Prussia was more valuable to England, than with any other great power.

Internal occurrences. Retirement of lord Mansfield from the king's bench.

During the recess, that illustrious sage, who had so long presided over the judicial decisions of his country, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, thought that many years of labour, without reproach, might be followed by a few years of rest, and retired from the judicative bench. For comprehending the law of this particular country, William Murray, a man of the most acute and extensive genius, had prepared himself by a profound study of history, general ethics, the philosophy of jurisprudence, investigation of human passions and conduct, and the civil law, on which the judicial institutions of so great a part

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of modern Europe are founded. On this basis he raised his superstructure of knowledge of the English code: to the depths of legal science, the accuracy and extent of juridical details, he added the pleasing and impressive accomplishments of an engaging, graceful, and persuasive eloquence. From such an union and extent of qualifications, Mr. Murray very early rose to most distinguished practice. With such opportunities of observing the circumstances of society, of civil actions and engagements, and criminal perpetrations, his penetrating and comprehensive mind saw that the progress of social, and especially commercial intercourse, was producing new combinations which had not been specifically foreseen when the laws applied to such subjects were enacted; therefore he inferred, that the essential principles of justice required such a latitude of interpretation, as would render existing laws applicable to the new cases. The intelligent reader must know that there are two great standards of judicial interpretation; the one the authority of custom, decision, and statute, according to literal definition; the other according to the general principles of equity, construing particular law, unwritten or written, in such a way as best to answer the great ends of justice. The learned reader must recollect, that at Rome two sects of civilians arose from the abovementioned difference; the Proculians and the Sabinians,[p] taking their names from two eminent jurists. The first of these, resting entirely on authority and definition, merely considered the letter of the law: the second, interpreting more freely, endeavoured to adapt it to their conceptions of justice in the case. Each of these modes has advantages and disadvantages: by the former the parties may know the exact rule by which their dispute will be tried, but may find the literal judge difficulted in applying his rule to their case; or entangled by precedents, forms, and definitions, unable to solve the question agreeably to substantial justice: by the latter the parties may, from a just and competent judge, expect an equitable determination of the question: but they depend on his individual understanding and integrity. By deviating

Improvements under his judicative supremacy, especially in mercantile laws.

Strict and liberal interpreters of law, their respective advantages and disadvantages.

p See account of Justinian's Code, Gibbon, vol. vi.

from literal explanation, in the progress of construction the law may be changed; and thus the judge may become a legislator. During the republican periods of the Roman law, strict and rigid interpretation of usages and decrees prevailed: during its imperial history, latitude of construction was gradually substituted. When Tribonian and his associate civilians digested the laws into one great body under Justinian, its constructive character predominated: hence, modern jurists, whose legal doctrines have owed a great part of their formation to the civil law, have interpreted freely. The close precision of English reasoning has diffused itself through municipal institutions, and combining with the English accurate sense of justice, has, in the great body of the law, made so specific provisions for all cases, when the laws were enacted, likely to occur, that it may be safely advanced as a general position, that in every question within the knowledge, foresight, and intent of our lawgivers, the more nearly the decision follows the letter of the law, the more fully will the purposes of justice be answered: but when combinations of engagements and conduct arise, which lawgivers have not specifically anticipated, and on which the judge is called to give decision, he must apply the constructive character of the civil law. The personage before us, partly from his education, in a great measure from having to meet subjects of judicial inquiry, to which neither decisions nor decrees could precisely apply; and, perhaps, also partly from that powerful and comprehensive genius, which in seeking its ends might less regard customary details than adequacy of means, verged more to a constructive than literal interpretation: but his judgments were just; they repaired injury, compensated losses, and punished crimes; they confirmed civil rights, repressed vice, supported virtue, promoted the order and tranquillity of the society. The most fertile sources of new cases, during the long judicial supremacy of this eminent judge, were commerce with its subordinate arts and instruments. In considering the various and diversified contracts of this kind, which neither precedents nor statutes could solve, lord Mansfield recurred to a very simple principle of ethics; that, where the terms of covenants do not precisely ascertain the extent and obligations,

Lord Mansfield of the latter kind.

Principle of his decisions in undefined and unprecedented cases.

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would apply; but you must recognise his principles and criteria of determination in the immutable laws of reason and rectitude. Lord Mansfield's procedure on the bench was, on the whole, the best that could be adopted by himself, or any other judge of consummate wisdom: how far, as a general model, it ought to be followed by all judges, might be a matter of doubtful inquiry. Perhaps, on the whole, unless a judge be uncommonly sagacious and able, literal interpretation, keeping as closely as possible to precedent and statute, if in some cases it may be an obstacle to what is completely right, yet in a much greater variety is a preventive of wrong.

His lordship was succeeded by Lloyd Kenyon, who, by professional ability and industry, had risen to be master of the rolls; and now, being chief justice of the king's bench was called to the house of peers by the title of lord Kenyon.

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Distemper of the king—assumes an alarming appearance—Peers and commons assemble on the day appointed for the meeting of parliament.—Adjourn for a fortnight till the fact be ascertained.—Physicians being examined, agree that a temporary incapacity exists.—Houses meet to prepare for a supply.—Mr. Pitt moves an inquiry into precedents.—Mr. Fox declares, that in such circumstances the heir apparent has a right to exercise the executive power.—Mr. Pitt contends that the right of supplying the deficiency is in the people, through their representatives.—Lord Loughborough, with some distinctions, agrees with Mr. Fox.—Mr. Fox explains his doctrine, which Mr. Pitt still controverts.—Question brought to issue.—Determined that the supply of the deficiency rests with the houses of parliament.—Mr. Pitt proposes that the chancellor shall be empowered to put the seal to a commission for opening parliament.—After a violent debate, carried.—Frederic duke of York opposes administration.—Mr. Cornwall dying, Mr. Grenville is chosen speaker.—Mr. Pitt's plan of regency—is submitted to the prince of Wales.—His highness expresses his disapprobation and reasons, but deems it incumbent on him to accept the office.—Second examination of the physicians.—Hopes of his majesty's speedy recovery.—Mr. Pitt's plan of regency laid before parliament.—Principle; that the power delegated should answer without exceeding the purposes of trust.—Details and restrictions.—Scheme reprobated by opposition.—Arguments for and against.—Princes of the blood all vote on the side of opposition.—Warm praise and severe censure of, by the respective parties throughout the nation.—Impartial estimates of its merits.—Irish parliament addresses the prince to assume the regency of Ireland.—Favourable turn of his majesty's distemper.—Convalescence.—Complete recovery.—Universal joy through-

out the nation.—His majesty goes to St. Pauls to return thanks.—Festive rejoicings.—Renewed application for the repeal of the test and corporation acts.—Chief and most eminent men of the dissenters.—Proposed relief from the penal laws against nonconformists—opposed by the bishops.—Refused.—Slave trade.—Mr. Wilberforce's motion for the abolition.—Arguments for, on the ground of religion and humanity.—Consideration postponed to the next session.—Mr. Grenville appointed secretary of state.—Mr. Addington speaker of the house of commons.—Financial scheme.—A loan required (according to the minister) from a temporary cause.—Mr. Sheridan disputes his calculations.—Bill for subjecting tobacco to the excise.—Popular clamour against this bill.—Passed into a law.—Progressive prosperity of India stated by Mr. Dundas.—Slow progress of Mr. Hastings's trial.—Motions respecting it in the commons.—Session rises.

THE close of the present year was marked by a signal calamity which befel this nation; but, dreadful as was its first aspect, terrible and afflicting the fears of its continuance, proving only temporary, grief and dismay at its existence were speedily overwhelmed in joy for its removal.

Distemper of the king.

THE vigorous constitution and temperate habits of the sovereign, now in the prime of his life, appeared to promise to his people the long duration of a reign directed to their happiness: contemplating his countenance and form with natural health, invigorated by exercise, and secured by regularity of living, his people confidently expected that the paternal goodness, which for twenty-eight years they had experienced, would, after twenty-eight years more, be still exerting itself for their benefit, but the prospect was now overcast.

IN the latter end of autumn all ranks were alarmed by a report that his majesty was seriously indisposed. On the twenty-fourth of October resolved, notwithstanding illness, to perform the functions of his royal office he held a levee; and though it was obvious to every one present, that his majesty's health was very materially affected, yet no symptoms indicated any definite species

malady. On the king's return to Windsor, his distemper assumed a very alarming appearance; it was found that it had formed itself into a brain fever, attended with a delirium, so often resulting from that dreadful disorder. The mental derangement having continued to the beginning of November, without any intermission, at length became public; and the intelligence diffused grief and consternation among his loyal and affectionate subjects. The prince of Wales repairing to Windsor to the queen, these personages were attended by the lord chancellor, and concerted measures for the management of his majesty's domestic affairs in the present emergency. Meanwhile, all those who, by their rank and situation in the state, were required to take a part in so new and unexpected an exigence, assembled in the capital. Mr. Fox had spent part of the recess in Switzerland; to him, as a man from whose extraordinary abilities most beneficial advantage was expected, an express was immediately despatched, and he hurried to England. The twentieth of November was the day on which the prorogation of parliament was to expire; and the meeting took place as a matter of course. The peers and the commons remained in their separate chambers; the chancellor in the upper, and Mr. Pitt in the lower house, notified the cause of their assembling without the usual notice and summons, and stated the impropriety of their proceeding, under such circumstances, to the discussionof any public business; and both houses resolved unanimously to adjourn for fifteen days. Mr. Pitt observed that, if his majesty's illness should unhappily continue longer than the period of their adjournment, it would be indispensably necessary for the house to take into immediate consideration the means of supplying, as far as they were competent, the want of the royal presence; it was, therefore, incumbent upon them to insure a full attendance, in order to give every possible weight and solemnity to their proceedings: for this purpose it was ordered, that the house should be called over on Thursday the fourth of December, and that letters should be sent, requiring the attendance of every member: orders to the same effect were issued by the lords. On the day before the appointed meeting, the physicians

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assumes an alarming appearance.

The peers and commons assemble on the day appointed for the meeting of parliament.

They adjourn for a fortnight till the fac be ascertained.

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Physicians being examined, agree that a temporary incapacity exists.

who had attended his majesty were examined by the privy council, and the three following questions were proposed and answered: first, is his majesty's state of health such as to render him incapable of meeting parliament, or attending to public business? the answer of all was, he certainly is incapable: the second question respected the probability of a cure, and the duration of the illness: they concurred in the probability of a cure, though they could not limit the time: the third question was, whether the physicians judged from general experience, the particular symptoms of his majesty's case, or both? the most frequent answer was, from general experience; but doctor Willis, who entered more minutely on the subject, in his answers, than the other physicians, stated the circumstances which he deemed favourable to a speedy recovery. It was afterwards agreed by both houses, that the physicians should be examined by committees composed, as nearly as possible, of an equal number of members from both parties. It being ascertained that a temporary incapacity existed, Mr. Pitt, in order to pave the way for supply, moved, that a committee should be appointed to examine the journals and report precedents from similar or analagous cases. Mr. Fox objected to a committee for such a purpose, as nugatory and productive of unnecessary delay: Mr. Pitt (he said) knew there was in the journals no precedent to be found of the suspension of executive government, where there was at the same time an heir apparent of full age and capacity: he himself was fully convinced, upon the maturest consideration of the principles and practice of the constitution, and of the analogy of the common law of the land, that whenever the sovereign, from sickness, infirmity, or other incapacity was unable to exercise the functions of his high office, the heir apparent, being of full age and capacity, had as indisputable a claim to the exercise of the executive power, in the name and on behalf of the sovereign, during the continuance of such incapacity, as in case of his natural demise:[s] the prince himself, from the peculiar delicacy of his situation, had not made the claim, but there was no

The houses meet to prepare for a supply. Mr Pitt moves an inquiry into precedents.

Mr. Fox declares, that in such circumstances the heir apparent has a right to exercise the executive power.

[s] See Parliamentary Debates, Dec. 10, 1788.

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doubt that it was his right to supply the place of his father. Mr. Pitt combated this doctrine, as totally inconsistent with actual history and the spirit of the constitution: there were he admitted, no precedents applicable to this specific cause of incapacity; but whatever disability had at any time arisen in the executive branch, as the history of the country showed, had been supplied by parliament. When the regular exercise of the powers of government was from any cause suspended, to whom could the right of providing a remedy for the existing defect devolve, but to the people, from whom all the powers of government originated? To assert an inherent right in the prince of Wales to assume the government, was virtually to revive those exploded ideas of the divine and indefeasible authority of princes, which had justly sunk into contempt, and almost into oblivion. Kings and princes derive their powers from the people, and to the people alone, through the organ of the representatives, did it appertain to decide in cases for which the constitution had made no specific or positive provision. On these grounds Mr. Pitt insisted that the prince had no more RIGHT to be appointed to supply the existing deficiency, than any other subject; though he admitted that, in the present case, *expediency* dictated that parliament should offer him the regency: substitution of another to execute the office of a king, during a temporary incapacity, was merely a measure of necessary policy: it was incumbent on legislature to intrust the authority to such person or persons, as it should deem most likely to answer the purpose: after these observations the question being put, it was carried that a committee should be appointed to search for precedents.

Mr. Pitt contends that the right of supplying the deficiency is in the people, through their representatives.

In the house of peers, lord Loughborough supported the position which Mr. Fox had advanced, and adduced great legal ingenuity and acuteness to prove, that the right ascribed to the prince was a corollary from the act of settlement, the general analogy of English law, the privileges and immunities peculiar to the prince, and belonging to no other subject. He admitted, however, that the exercise of this right ought not to commence until parliament had declared the sovereign's incapacity.

Lord Loughborough with some distinctions, agrees with Mr. Fox.

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Mr. Fox at the next meeting of the commons, made an explanation of his meaning, agreeable to lord Loughborough's interpretation, and said, that his expressions on a former day had been misrepresented: his position, which he was still ready to maintain, was, that the houses of parliament had the right to adjudge the fact of incapacity, but on such adjudication the heir apparent had the right of holding the reins of government whilst the incapacity lasted: as, however, Mr. Pitt agreed with him, that in the present circumstances the prince was the person who ought to hold that office, it would be much more prudent to abstain from discussing so nice and subtle distinctions. Mr. Pitt replied, that he differed as much from Mr. Fox respecting the question of right, now that he had explained his meaning, as before such an explanation. Mr. Fox (he said) now asserted, that the prince of Wales had a right to exercise the royal authority, under the present circumstances of the country; but that it was a right not in possession, until the prince could exercise it on what he called the adjudication of parliament. He on his part denied that the prince of Wales possessed any right whatever, and upon that point Mr. Fox and he were still at issue. This was a very important question, and must be decided before they could proceed any farther; there might be differences of opinion whether any regency was necessary as yet, and a difference of opinion might arise, if necessary, what were the powers requisite to be granted to the regent? but nothing could be determined till the matter of right should be discussed. He not only challenged Mr. Fox to adduce either precedent or law to support his doctrine, but actually showed from history that such a claim of right had been made, and had been resisted by parliament. In the reign of Henry VI. the duke of Gloucester, next heir to the crown,[t] claimed the regency during the minority of the king, and applied to parliament; the answer to this claim was, that he neither had by birth, nor by the will of his brother, any right whatever to the exercise of royal authority: they, however, appointed him regent, and intrusted him with the

t After the death of prince John of Lancaster duke of Bedford.

care of the young king. At the revolution, parliament proceeded on the same general principle; the king had ceased to act; to supply this deficiency, parliament acted as legislators: they did not restrict themselves to a simple address to the prince of Orange to accept the crown; they felt not only that they must have a king, but they must have a king on certain terms and conditions: they did what amounted to a legislative act: they came to a resolution to settle the crown, not on the prince of Orange and the heirs of his body, nor on the princess Mary and the heirs of her body, but on the prince and princess jointly. Here it was evident that, whatever the necessity of the case required at that time, the lords and commons possessed the power to provide for it, and consequently, whatever the necessity of the case demanded at present, the power belonged to the lords and commons to supply the deficiency. Parliament could have no possible interest in acting in any other way than as duty prompted and wisdom directed: and as it was agreeable to history, reason, and expediency, that they should provide for a specific object, it became them, in making the provisions, to extend or contract the trust to be delegated according as they thought either necessary for its execution. Thus, according to Mr. Pitt, precedent confirmed the analogy of the constitution, and both concurred with the expediency which required that the peers and the representatives of the people should provide for supplying an unforeseen deficiency.

The question brought to issue.

HAVING grounded his doctrine on these arguments and facts, concerning the right which Mr. Fox had asserted to be vested in the heir apparent, Mr. Pitt proposed on the sixteenth of December three resolutions:[u]

u The following are the resolutions: first, That it is the opinion of this committee, that his majesty is prevented, by his present indisposition, from coming to parliament, and from attending to public business; and that the personal exercise of the royal authority is thereby for the present interrupted: 2dly, That it is the opinion of this committee, that it is the right and duty of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons of Great Britain, now assembled, and lawfully, fully and freely, representing all the estates of the public of this realm, to provide the means of supplying the defect of the personal exercise of the royal authority, arising from his majesty's said indisposition, in such manner as the exigency of the case may appear to require: Resolved, "That for the purpose, and for maintaining entire the constitutional authority of the king, it is necessary, that the said lords spiritual and temporal, and commons of Great Britain, should determine on the means whereby the royal assent may be

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the first stating his majesty's present unfitness for performing the functions of the kingly office; secondly, that the lords and commons had a right to provide for that case, and were in duty bound to make such provisions: thirdly, that the lords and commons should determine on the most effectual means of exercising their right, by vesting the powers and authority of the crown on behalf of the king during his majesty's illness. Several amendments were proposed; without detailing these, it is sufficient to mention that their object was to address the prince of Wales, heir apparent, and of mature age, beseeching him to take upon himself the administration of the civil and military government of the country, during the indisposition of his majesty, and no longer. The admission of this proposition would have precluded every limitation of the kingly power, thus to be intrusted to a regent. Its supporters contended, that every part of the royal authority and prerogative was necessary for the discharge of kingly duties; if the regent were not intrusted with the whole power, he could not perform all the duties. By its opponents it was answered, that the situation for which they were called to provide was, from the concurrent testimony of the most competent witnesses, only temporary; the supply wanted, therefore, was also temporary. Various parts of the royal establishment belonged to the splendor and dignity of the crown, more than to its power or its executive functions. So much authority as was necessary to enable the regent to act as executive magistrate during the illness of the sovereign, should be conferred, but no more. The bounds and circumscriptions necessary upon this principle would be matter of cautious consideration to parliament, according to all the circumstances of the case. Such restrictions would be impossible if the present amendment were adopted. Parliament was to reflect on the present as a general question that would be a guide to future ages: they were to form measures for insuring the restitution of his power to the principal, when

given in parliament to such bill as may be passed by the two houses of parliament, respecting the exercise of the powers and authorities of the crown, in the name, and on the behalf of the king, during the continuance of his majesty's present indisposition." See parliamentary reports, Dec. 1788.

a substitute was no longer necessary; and in making this provision they were to consider men as men are generally found. Cases might arise, in which, if an heir obtained possession, he might be unwilling to return to expectancy; or, though an heir were ever so dutifully disposed himself, he might be misled by evil counsellors. No character could be more meritorious or more worthy of confidence than the present prince of Wales. Constitutional policy, however, proceeds not upon individual merits, but on general expedien- Every part of the principal authority was not wanted to e efficiency of the substitute. Why should they confer a delegate any more power than was necessary to an- er the purposes of the delegation? Our sovereign possess- as much power as was consistent with a free govern- ent, and no more; the regent was, by the scheme of inisters, to possess as much as was consistent with the ject of his temporary office, and no more; there was no respect offered to the regent by a circumscription ap- ying to the particular circumstances, as there was no dis- pect to our kings in the circumscriptions affixed to eir authority by the constitution. In both cases the inciple was the same; princes are men, and fallible like her human beings; let them be invested with all the thority which is conducive to the public welfare, and strained from that which might be prejudicial. Mr. itt informed the house, that he intended, if the resolu- ons should be adopted by the commons, and also meet he concurrence of the lords, to propose, that the lord igh chancellor should be empowered to put the great seal o a commission for opening the parliament in the usual orm; and that as soon as a bill should be passed by both houses for providing for the exercise of the royal author- ity, under certain limitations, during his majesty's indis- position, another commission should be sealed for giving to such act the royal assent. This project was very stre- nuously opposed: first, as unnecessary; because, all par- ties concurring unanimously in opinion that the prince of Wales should be invested with the regency, the procedure by address or declaration was the most simple, and the most consonant to the practice and constitutional functions of the two houses: the measure was unwarrantable; in

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fact is altered an essential part of the state; it made the two houses KINGS. To fix the form of a legal sanction on their proceedings, they were to give fictitiously a royal assent, but in reality their own assent to their own acts. If the houses assumed to themselves powers which belonged to the legislature, and proceeded to legislate, they would act in direct violation of the spirit of the constitution; even to a positive act of parliament, the 13th of Charles II. which expressly declared, that the two houses could not make laws without the king: after a long debate the resolutions were voted. Having passed the house of commons, they were introduced to the lords by the chancellor, and similar amendments were proposed. In the debate which ensued on that occasion, the question of right was resumed: an active part was taken by their royal highnesses the princes, and particularly by his majesty's second son, Frederic duke of York.

Determined that the supply of the deficiency rests with the houses of parliament.

Frederic duke of York opposed administration.

THIS illustrious youth received the first part of his education in his native country. Destined for the military profession he was afterwards sent to Germany, and spent several years in his own bishopric at Osnaburg, and his royal father's electoral dominions: thence he repaired to the court of Berlin, and completed his military education under the system which the Prussian hero had established. Eminently distinguished for manly beauty and graces, in natural endowments and acquired qualifications, he was one of the most accomplished princes of the age: having the strongest fraternal affection for his elder brother, between whom and him the closest intimacy from their childhood, had enhanced the sentiments of relation, on coming back to England he chiefly associated with the prince of Wales, and becoming acquainted with the companions of that exalted personage, he a considerable degree adopted their political opinions. "No claim (said "his highness) has been made by my royal brother; I am "confident the prince too well understands the sacred "principles which seated the house of Brunswic on the "throne of Great Britain, ever to assume or exercise any "power not derived from the will of the people, expressed by their representatives, and your lordships in par-"liament. On this ground, I hope, the house will avoid

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"pressing a decision which certainly was not necessary to "the great object expected from parliament, and which "must be most painful in the discussion to a family al- "ready sufficiently agitated and afflicted: these (continu- "ed his highness) are the sentiments of an honest heart, "equally influenced by duty and affection to my royal fa- "ther, and by attachment to the constitutional rights "of his subjects; and I am confident, that if my royal "brother were to address you in his place, as a peer of "the realm, these are the sentiments which he would dis- "tinctly avow." Though the peers warmly approved of the general sentiments expressed by his highness, and of the dignified manner in which they were delivered, yet the majority thought it necessary, since the question of right had once been started, to have it fully discussed; and the resolutions were carried by a considerable majority. A strong protest was entered against agreeing to these resolutions, and signed by the dukes of York and Cumberland, and forty-six other peers.[z] These proceedings of the house occupied the greater part of December. On the twenty-ninth of the month Mr. Cornwall speaker of the house of commons, was seized with a dreadful illness, which, four days after, the second of January 1789, ended in his death. The house meeting on the fifth, Mr. William Grenville was proposed by the friends of ministers as his successor, and sir Gilbert Elliot by opposition: the election was carried in favour of the former by a majority of two hundred and fifteen to one hundred and forty-four.

Mr. Cornwall dying, Mr. Grenville is appointed speaker. 1789.

THE preliminary subjects having been discussed by both houses, Mr. Pitt, before he explained his plan of regency to parliament, submitted its outlines to the prince in a letter, wherein he offered either to attend his highness, should any farther explanation be required, or to convey such explanation, in any other mode which the prince should signify to be most agreeable. This letter, sent on the thirtieth of December, stated the plan to be that which, according to the best judgment which they were able to form, his majesty's confidential servants had conceived proper to be proposed in the present circumstances: the

Mr. Pitt's plan of regency is submitted to the prince of Wales.

z See their names, State Papers, Dec. 29, 1788.

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outlines were, that his highness should be empowered to exercise the royal authority, in the name and on the behalf of his majesty, during his majesty's illness, and to do all acts which might legally be done by his majesty; that the care of his majesty's person, the management of the household, and the direction and appointment of the officers and servants therein should be in the queen, under such regulations as might be thought necessary. The power to be exercised by his highness should not extend to the disposal of either real or personal property of the king, except in the renewal of leases, to the bestowal of any pension, the reversion of any office, or any appointment whatever, but during his majesty's pleasure, except those granted by law for life; that his highness should not be empowered to confer the dignity of the peerage on any person except his majesty's issue who had attained the age of twenty-one years. This plan, the letter declared, was formed on the supposition, that his majesty's illness was only temporary, and would be of no long duration. It would be difficult to fix beforehand the precise period for which these provisions ought to last; but should his majesty's recovery be protracted to a more distant period than there was then reason to expect, the consideration of the plan, according to the exigency of the case, would be open to the wisdom of parliament.[y]

His highness expresses his disapprobation and reasons, but deems it incumbent on him to accept the office.

On the first of January an answer was delivered by his royal highness to the lord chancellor to be conveyed to Mr. Pitt. Respecting the measures already embraced by parliament, his highness declared he would observe a total silence: no act of the lords and commons could be a proper subject of his animadversion: but (he said) when previously to any discussion in parliament, the outlines of a scheme of government are sent for his consideration, in which it is proposed that he shall be personally and principally concerned, and by which the royal authority and the public welfare may be deeply affected, the prince would be unjustifiable were he to withhold an explicit declaration of his sentiments: his silence might be construed into a previous approbation of a plan, the accomplishment of which, every motive of duty to his father and sovereign,

y See State Papers, Dec. 30, 1788.

as well as of regard for the public interest, obliges him to consider as injurious to both. The scheme communicated by Mr. Pitt is a project for producing weakness, disorder, and insecurity, in every branch of the administration of affairs: a project for dividing the royal family from each other; for separating the court from the state; and therefore, by disjoining government from its natural and accustomed support, a scheme for disconnecting the authority to command service, from the power of animating it by reward; and for allotting to the prince all the invidious duties of government, without the means of softening them to the public by any one act of grace, favour or benignity. These positions the prince adduced detailed arguments to support: the plan (he proceeded) was not founded on any general principle, but was calculated to infuse groundless jealousies and suspicions in that quarter, whose confidence it should ever be the first pride of his life to merit and obtain. With regard to the object of the limitations, his majesty's ministers had afforded him no light; they had informed him *what* powers they meant to refuse him, but not WHY they were to be withheld: he deemed it a fundamental principle of this constitution, that the powers and prerogatives of the crown are vested there, as a trust for the benefit of the people; and that they are sacred only as they are necessary to the preservation of that poise and balance of the constitution, which experience has proved to be the true security of the liberty of the subject: but the plea of public utility ought to be strong, manifest, and urgent, which calls for the extinction or suspension of any one of those essential rights in the supreme power or its representative. If security were wanted, that his majesty should repossess his rightful government whenever it pleased Providence to remove his present calamity, the prince would be the first to urge the adoption of measures conducive to that purpose, as the preliminary and paramount consideration of any settlement in which he would consent to share: if attention to what his majesty's feelings and wishes might be on the happy day of his recovery were the object, the prince expressed his firm conviction, that no event would be more repugnant to the feelings of his royal father, than the

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knowledge, that the government of his son and representative had exhibited the sovereign power of the realm in a state of degradation, curtailed authority and diminished energy; a state hurtful in practice to the prosperity and good government of his people, and injurious in its precedent to the security of the monarch, and the right of his family. The provision respecting the king's property was totally unnecessary, as that was perfectly secured, during his majesty's life, by the law of the land. The prince having discharged, as he conceived, his indispensible duty in giving his free opinion on the plan submitted to his consideration, concluded with declaring in the following terms, his reason for accepting, notwithstanding the objections he had enumerated, the proffered trust: His[x] conviction of the evils which may arise to the king's interests, to the peace and happiness of the royal family, and to the safety and welfare of the nation, from the government of the country remaining longer in its present maimed and debilitated state, outweighs, in the prince's mind, every other consideration, and will determine him to undertake the painful trust imposed upon him by the present melancholy necessity (which of all the kings subjects he deplores the most), in full confidence, that the affection and loyalty to the king, the experienced attachment to the house of Brunswic, and the generosity which has always distinguished this nation, will carry him through the many difficulties inseparable from this critical situation, with comfort to himself, with honour to the king, and with advantage to the public.

SUCH was the substance of the letter written by the heir apparent on this momentous subject, and though great numbers did not assent to his highness's conclusions concerning the inexpediency of the proposed restrictions, yet every judge of composition and argument allowed that it was a very masterly performance.

Second examination of the physicians.

ON the sixth of January, when Mr. Pitt was about to propose his plan of regency to the house of commons, Mr. Loveden, member for Abingdon, moved, that, as the intended limitations would have a reference to the state of

x The letter is written in the third person. See State papers, Jan. 1, 1789.

his majesty's health, and several weeks had elapsed since that had been ascertained, the physicians should be again examined. After a very warm debate, including a considerable share of personal altercation, it was agreed that a new committee should be appointed, and that the physicians should be interrogated. The result of the examination was, that his majesty's recovery continued probable. The proceedings of the committee having occupied about a week, the report was brought up on Tuesday the thirteenth of January, and appointed to be taken into consideration the following Friday. On the sixteenth Mr. Pitt opened his plan to the house: the subject (he said) divided itself into three distinct heads: first, the nature of the king's illness; secondly, the principles upon which the two houses were authorized to act on this occasion: and thirdly, the application of those principles to the measures which he should propose, of remedying the present defect in the personal exercise of the royal authority. From the recent examination, they were confirmed in the conclusions drawn from the former, that his majesty was by his illness rendered incapable of attending to the business of his station; but that it was probable he might recover, and once more be able to resume the reins of government. In these two points all the physicians were agreed, they were not all equally sanguine in their hopes of his majesty's recovery: it was, however, extremely satisfactory, that the expectations of the several physicians were respectively favourable, in proportion to their knowledge of that particular distemper and that individual case: the deficiency for which they were called to provide was temporary, and would probably be short. The principles by which the houses were to proceed, arose from the nature and probable duration of the deficiency; they were to provide for the present necessity only, and to do no more than it required; they were also to guard against any embarrassment in the resumption of the royal authority, and therefore to grant such powers only as were requisite for the government of the country with energy and effect. On these principles he had framed his plan, of which the outlines were exhibited in his letter to the prince of Wales. The regent was to exercise the whole

Mr. Pitt's plan of regency is laid before parliament.

Principle: that the power should answer without exceeding the purposes of the trust.

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Details and restrictions.

royal authority, subject to restrictions which were intended not to interfere with executive efficiency. The limitations were reducible to four heads: first, that the power of his highness should not extend to the bestowal of the peerage, except to his majesty's issue that had attained twenty-one years of age. To prove the propriety of this limitation, Mr. Pitt adduced three grounds upon which this prerogative was intrusted by the constitution to the crown: first, it was designed to enable the king to counteract the designs of any factious cabal in the house of lords: secondly, to enable the sovereign to reward eminent merit: thirdly, this power was designed to provide for the fluctuations of wealth and property in the country by raising men of great landed interest to the peerage that branch of the legislature would be always placed upon its true and proper basis: for none of these objects was this prerogative wanted in the present case; there was no probability that any such cabal should now be formed to obstruct the government of his royal highness: on the other hand, if this power were conferred on the regent such a number of peers might be created, as would greatly embarrass the government of his majesty on his restoration to health: as a reward of merit, or a nobilitation of property, the suspension of this prerogative, during the *temporary* incapacity which they were supplying, could be attended with no material inconvenience: should the unfitness prove more permanent than they expected, parliament could extend the regent's power as far as might be then deemed necessary for the public welfare. On the same principle was founded the second restriction, by which the regent was not empowered to grant any pension or place for life, or in reversion, except such offices as are by law held for life, or during good behaviour: the powers restrained were not necessary to the executive government, temporarily to be held by the regent; and their exercise might be injurious to the government of his majesty on his recovery. The third restriction, respecting the king's personal property, he scarcely thought necessary; but as they were acting on parliamentary principles, and endeavouring to make their provisions as comprehensive as possible, he accounted it his duty to mak

Arguments for

this regulation a part of his plan. The fourth resolution was intended to intrust the sovereign's person, during his illness, to the guardianship of the queen: he proposed to put the whole of his majesty's household under her authority, investing her with all powers to dismiss and appoint as she should think proper: unless she held this control, the queen could not discharge the important trust committed to her care: a council should be named to assist the queen with advice, but without any power of control: trustees should be appointed to manage the real and personal estate of the king, but should have no power of disposing any part of it, except by lease. The propositions were very strenuously supported, both upon the arguments which the minister himself adduced, and on others. The law officers maintained, as a fundamental doctrine, that the king's political character was, in the eye of the law, inseparable from his personal; that it remained entire and perfect, and would continue so to do until his natural demise; and to this principle frequent reference was made in the course of the debates. The senator who vindicated the plan of Mr. Pitt, in the most extensive details, elaborate research, and accurate induction, was Mr. Grenville, the new speaker: in the committee this member took an opportunity of delivering his opinion; and for near three hours both occupied and engaged the attention of the house. His oration on the subject stated every historical fact, explained and enforced all the arguments of precedent, law, and constitutional analogy, by which the proceedings of the ministers were justified; and also endeavoured to combat each and all objections which they encountered. From the constitutional history of the country he attempted to demonstrate, that the principle on which our ancestors both conferred and bounded the powers of a regent were the same that were now applied. It was proposed on the one hand to establish a form of government capable of conducting the public business; and on the other, to provide complete and ample security to enable the sovereign to resume the exercise of his authority, fully, freely, and without embarrassment, when the existing deficiency should terminate. Keeping this principle uniformly in view, he applied it to the various restrictions, and contended, that

Speech of Mr. Grenville.

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the extent of the delegation was sufficient for the energetic useful execution of the trust, and that the bounds were necessary to the security of resumption. The propositions were opposed on the following grounds: they tended, it was affirmed, to debilitate and humble the executive government, by stripping it of its legal prerogatives: the power of bestowing peerages was an integral part of the royal authority, a shield that, from its earliest days, the constitution had provided for its own defence and preservation and which could not be wrested from the crown without bringing destruction on our polity. Mr. Fox, with his wonted energy, impugned the doctrine of the law officers, concerning the inseparability of the king's personal and political character: he wished (he said) to hear this doctrine explained; for how that person, whose political faculties were confessedly suspended by a severe visitation of Providence, could still exist in the full enjoyment of his political character, was beyond his understanding to comprehend: the doctrine seemed, indeed, to be founded on those blind and superstitious notions, by which, as they all knew from history, human institutions had been, as it were, deified; and which were inculcated for the purpose of impressing a strong and implicit reverence of authority in the minds of the multitude: while the supporters of this doctrine took up the superstitions of antiquity, they rejected their morality; they enveloped the sacred person of the king with a political veil, which was calculated to inspire awe and secure obedience; but laboured to enfeeble the arms of government, to cripple it in all its great and essential parts, to expose it to hostile attack and to contumely; to take from it the dignity which appertained to itself, and the use for which it was designed towards the people. He reprobated with peculiar severity the restrictions which were proposed on the creation of peers: Mr. Pitt had conferred that rank upon no less than forty-two persons during the five years that he had been in office; and he had not the pretext of saying that any cabal was formed to thwart his measures in the house of lords, which made such a promotion necessary; and if such were the means to which he had been obliged to resort, surrounded with all the power and influence of the crown, what must be the con-

dition of those who should have to contend, in the crippled state to which they would be reduced, against an opposition armed with so large a portion of the usual patronage of government. He expressed his indignation and abhorrence of a project that placed in a state of competition persons so nearly connected by blood, by duty, and by affection, and thereby excited that mutual jealousy which, in some degree is inseparable from the human mind: how much (he said) had they to answer for, who, with a perfect knowledge of this weakness of human nature, wickedly and wantonly pursued a measure which might involve the empire in endless distractions. To these objections ministers replied, that though the prerogatives proposed to be withheld from the regent were necessary for the sovereign, they were not indispensably requisite to a temporary substitute: the regent was to possess the supreme direction of the ordnance, army and navy; the power of making war, peace, and alliances; the choice of his ministers, and all subordinate officers; the appointment of bishops and judges: such authority was sufficient for a temporary exercise of the executive functions, though restrained from promotions and donations; the influence of which, lasting after the trust had terminated, might have disturbed the government of the rightful holder. These were the grounds on which Mr. Pitt, his coadjutors and supporters, replied to the objections of the other party, on the restriction concerning peerages. The resolution, vesting in the queen, instead of the regent, the appointment and direction of the household officers, was opposed upon more special grounds: it withheld a power from a responsible, to confer it on an irresponsible person; tended to establish in the empire a fourth estate, against which Mr. Pitt had exerted himself so successfully a few years before; and was calculated to excite discord between the members of the royal family. If the nomination of attendants were withheld from the regent because it was dangerous to trust him with such appointments, the remedy was inadequate to the disease; for the army and navy could not be very harmless engines in the hands of a man, to whom it would not be safe to trust the nomination of lords

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and grooms of the bedchamber.[y] Ministerial speakers replied, that it was unanimously agreed the royal person should be intrusted to her majesty; the disposal of the household was necessary for her execution of that trust: besides, the officers in question, though a proper and becoming part of the state and splendor of a monarch reigning over a great and opulent people, were not necessary to the energy of the executive government during its temporary delegation: on these grounds the resolutions were supported and opposed in both houses: they were at last carried; and it was voted, that the prince and queen should be informed of the measures of legislation. On the thirtieth of January the resolutions were presented to these illustrious personages, by a committee of peers and commoners. The answer of his highness was similar in substance to the concluding parts of his letter to Mr. Pitt, which are already embodied in this narrative. Her majesty's answer was to the following effect: "My lords "and gentlemen, my duty and gratitude to the king, and "the sense I must ever entertain of my great obligations "to this country, will certainly engage my most earnest "attention to the anxious and momentous trust intended "to be reposed in me by parliament. It will be a great "consolation to me to receive the aid of a council, of "which I shall stand so much in need, in the discharge of "a duty wherein the happiness of my future life is indeed "deeply interested, but which a higher object, the happi-"ness of a great, loyal, and affectionate people, renders "still more important." The answers being communicated

[y] Lord North, declining in years, and afflicted with blindness, took a very active share in opposing the plan of regency, and fully showed, that the appropriate excellencies of his eloquence, ingenuity of argument, promptness of reply, and brilliancy of wit, were still undiminished. Expatiating upon the arguments stated in the text, the minister (he said) strains at a gnat, but swallows a camel: he is not afraid to delegate the great functions of the executive power, but he startles at the small: take the patronage, take the disposal of the civil, political, and military appointments, but keep away from the court: command the navy and army, but abstain from the household troops: let the houses of parliament become executive, as well as legislative; break down the barrier of the constitution, cripple the sovereign power: all this you may do, but touch not the pages, grooms of the stole, gentlemen ushers, or lords of the bedchamber. This, said his lordship, reminds me of the stories with which my old nurse used to entertain me about the achievements of witches; they could ride through the air, agitate the elements, raise the wind, bring rain, lightning, and thunder; all this they would do without flinching, but if they came to a *straw*, there they boggled, stumbled, and could proceed no farther.

to the houses, it was moved in the house of lords, that letters patent should be issued under the great seal, empowering certain commissioners to open and hold the king's parliaments at Westminster.[z] The arguments already adduced on this subject, by both parties, were frequently repeated; and the names of the proposed commissioners were read, and at their head were the prince of Wales, the duke of York, the dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland. The duke of York, rising, said he had not been informed that it was intended to insert his name in the commission; he, therefore, had not been able to take steps to prevent the nomination: not wishing to stand upon record, and to be handed to posterity as approving such a measure, he could not sanction the proceedings with his name: his opinion of the whole system adopted was already known: he deemed the proposition, as well as every other that had been embraced respecting the same object, to be unconstitutional and illegal: he desired, therefore, to have no concern with any part of the business; and requested that his name, and the name of his brother, the prince of Wales, might be left out of the commission: the duke of Cumberland desired his own name and the duke of Gloucester's might also be omitted: accordingly the princes were left out of the nomination. The resolution being carried, was on the second of February adopted by the commons; the following day the houses assembled as a regular parliament, and, the lord chancellor being indisposed, earl Bathurst, president of the council, opened the causes of the present meeting, and the objects for which they were to provide. On the sixth of February Mr. Pitt introduced his regency bill, founded on the principles already investigated, and the resolutions already voted. Its various clauses and provisions having undergone in detail much opposition, it was passed on the twelfth of February, carried to the house of lords, and read a second time without opposition.

Princes of the blood all vote on the side of opposition.

Regency bill.

HER majesty, knowing the anxious concern that his subjects felt for their beloved sovereign, with the most considerate goodness gratified them by sending to St.

Recovery of the king.

z See Parliamentary Reports.

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James's daily accounts of the state of his health, as ascertained by the opinion of his physicians. For some days these reports announced that his majesty's illness had begun to take a very favourable turn, and aroused all ranks of his subjects with the most pleasing and sanguine expectations. On Thursday the ninth of February the lord chancellor, as soon as the peers assembled in order to go into a committee on the regency bill, informed them that the improvement of the king's health, already stated in the official reports of the physicians, was still progressive; an intelligence which certainly must prove pleasing to every man in the kingdom: in this situation of things he conceived they could not possibly proceed upon the bill before them; and therefore moved, that their lordships do immediately adjourn to Tuesday next the twenty-fourth. On the day appointed the chancellor informed the house that he had that morning attended his majesty by his own command, and found him perfectly recovered; he therefore moved a farther adjournment, which being again repeated, his lordship on the fifth of March informed the peers, that his majesty would signify his farther pleasure to both houses on Tuesday the tenth of March: and thus ended the necessity and project of a regency.

Warm praises and severe censures of the plan of regency throughout the nation.

The plan of regency received the warmest praises and severest censures from the supporters of the respective parties throughout the kingdom. By the one Mr. Pitt was represented as having again saved the country from the domination of an ambitious faction, which, if restored to power, might not have been easily displaced; that the prince, intelligent and well disposed as he was himself, was so much guided by these counsellors as to excite apprehensions, lest at their instigation he might act differently from what his own mind would prompt and dictate. By the other it was alleged, that Mr. Pitt's object was to restrict the regent so much, as to render it necessary for him to come to some terms of accommodation with those who should oppose his present favourites; that his purpose simply was, by retaining a considerable portion of the kingly influence in hands favourable to his measures, to secure the means of reestablishing in office himself and his friends; that the restraints designed for the prince

were inconsistent with the energetic exercise of the executorial functions; that they were justifiable on no general principle, as every part of the kingly prerogative was necessary for its constitutional purposes; that they implied an injurious doubt and suspicion concerning the character and probable conduct of the prince; and were personally and individually insulting as well as unjust to his highness.

Impartial estimate.

Impartial observers, probably, will neither altogether agree in the panegyric nor the reproach. From history, as well as the general principles of the constitution, it appears that it belongs to parliament, as representatives of the people, to provide for any exigency which was not foreseen or described by the law of the land; that parliament has exercised this power, and that its exertions have been beneficial. Mr. Fox's first position was a theory which neither experience nor analogy supported: his explanatory doctrine, declaring the prince's right, on a parliamentary adjudication of the case, equally wanted the support of experience or analogy. Concerning the competency to provide a remedy in the existing exigency, the opinion of Mr. Pitt seems to rest on more logical and conclusive reasoning than the opinion of Mr. Fox: but as it was evidently expedient that the heir apparent should be the regent, the power to be conferred ought to be as much as was necessary for answering the purposes of the appointment: he was for the time to supply the want of the kingly office. It is difficult to conceive that the acting chief magistrate could perform the official functions necessary for the good of the country, without the full prerogative, unless by a supposition totally inconsistent with the constitution, that the crown possessed prerogatives not necessary for the good of the subject. That any difficulty could arise in the resumption of his office by the rightful holder, when it should please heaven to restore his health, was an hypothesis containing an union of many and great improbabilities: that the heir apparent should desire to obstruct the resumption, could only be apprehended on a supposition that the prince was totally deficient of filial duty, loyalty, and patriotism; in short, in every virtue becoming his station: such a notion had evi-

dently no foundation in his conduct: that, intending
himself, he might by his advisers be misled to so gre
degree, would be impossible, unless on a supposition
he himself was totally deficient in point of judgment
common intelligence, which was well known to be q
contrary to the truth. Reviewers of the conduct of
party which he countenanced, though they might di
prove of many of their acts and measures, could find
thing in the history or character of lord Loughboro
the duke of Portland, lord North, and Mr. Fox,
could render it likely that they would counsel such an
suppose: but if the prince and these illustrious supp
he should propose or attempt such measures, how
they to be put into execution? were the legislature
the nation to join in the scheme? without their con
nance, such a disloyal and undutiful attempt would be
practicable, and would discover infatuated folly as we
desperate wickedness in its authors. Vigilant cautio
guard against such improbable dangers would be a su
fluous and idle exercise of deliberative policy. In
from Mr. Pitt's scheme it is evident that no such
were seriously entertained: the most efficient engin
power, the command of the national force, was to be
into the regent's hands. The chief object of restric
was the bestoval of titles, the distribution of dona
either in pensions or appointments equivalent to pensi
the subtraction of these measures of influence from
intended regent, it was morally certain, in the circum
ces of the case, would be an accession of influence to
proposer of the restrictions: unbiassed examination th
fore, without questioning Mr. Pitt's *motives* to have
pure, loyal, and patriotic, in his project of regency, ca
avoid perceiving that the manifest *tendency* of his res
tive clauses was to secure considerable influence to
own party: such an opinion is certainly no imputation
the character of a statesman; it merely supposes tha
was a lover of power, and preferred an administration c
posed of his political friends, to an administration c
posed of his political adversaries. But whatever ma
the opinion formed of the restrictions designed to be
posed on the prince regent, we may safely conclude,

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the principle of ministers, respecting the right of supplying a deficiency in the executive government, was the most agreeable to the history and spirit of the constitution.

The Irish parliament addresses the prince to assume the regency of Ireland.

The Irish parliament on this occasion exercised that independent political power which it had so recently ascertained, and adopted a plan totally opposite to the project of the British senate, and similar to that which had been in England proposed by Mr. Fox. A motion, supported by Mr. Grattan, and opposed by Mr. Fitzgibbon, with other eminent speakers, was carried without a division, for presenting an address to the prince of Wales, requesting him to take on himself the government of Ireland, during his majesty's incapacity. A similar address was voted in the house of peers; and on the nineteenth of February, both lords and commons waited on the lord lieutenant with their address, and requested him to transmit the same, his excellency returned for answer, that, under the impressions he felt of his official duty, and of the oath he had taken, he did not consider himself warranted to lay before the prince an address, purporting to invest his royal highness with powers to take upon him the government of that realm, before he should be enabled by law so to do, and therefore was obliged to decline transmitting their address to Great Britain. After the answer was discussed in parliament, it was resolved that, his excellency the lord lieutenant having thought proper to decline to transmit to his royal highness George prince of Wales the address of both houses of parliament, a competent number of members should be appointed to present the said address to his royal highness: the resolution was carried in both houses: the duke of Leinster and earl Charlemont were appointed commissioners on the part of the peers; the right honourable Thomas Conolly, right honourable J. O'Neil, the right honourable W. B. Ponsonby, and J. Stuart, esqrs. were appointed commissioners on the part of the commons. These gentlemen soon after departed for England, but the auspicious recovery of our king rendered their purpose unnecessary.

On the tenth of March, the commons having attended at the bar of the house of lords, the chancellor informed them that his majesty, not thinking fit to be then pre-

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sent in his royal person, had caused a commission to be issued, authorizing the commissioners, who had been appointed by former letters patent, to hold the parliament, to open and declare certain farther causes for holding the same. The commission being read, the chancellor addressing the houses in the name of the commissioners, acquainted them that his majesty, being recovered from his late severe indisposition, and enabled to attend the public affairs of his kingdom, had commanded him to convey his warmest acknowledgments for the additional proofs which they had given of their affectionate attachment to his person, and of their zealous concern for the honour and interests of his crown, and the security and good government of his dominions. Since the close of the last session, the king had concluded a defensive alliance with Prussia, copies of which would be laid before the house: his majesty's endeavours were employed, during the last summer, in conjunction with his allies, in order to prevent, as much as possible, the extension of hostilities in the north; and to manifest his desire of effecting a general pacification, no opportunity would be neglected on his part to promote this salutary object; and, in the mean time, he had the satisfaction of receiving from all foreign courts continued assurances of their friendly disposition towards this country. Addresses of congratulation and thanks were moved in both houses, and unanimously voted: an address to the queen was also proposed, and carried with the same unanimity.

Joy diffused through the nation on the recovery of their beloved monarch.

So great was the joy which diffused itself through the metropolis and the nation, that for several days scarcely any thing was attended to, but expressions of delight for the recovery of their sovereign. Conscious as his subjects were of their affection and veneration for their king, they had never known how dearly they loved his goodness, how highly they prized his virtues, until grief for his calamity, and the dread of its consequences, disclosed to them the poignancy of their feelings. Confident as our king was of being beloved and valued by his subjects, yet occasion had not fully manifested to him the force, extent, and intenseness of their affections, until they had exhibited themselves in universal delight that he was, as

it were, risen to them from the dead. Perhaps the annals of history do not record a more sincere, tender and general concern of subjects in the welfare of a sovereign, than displayed themselves in the affliction, gloom, and despondency of Britons, when his majesty's illness was known, and before the probability of recovery was declared, the anxious and eager hopes that sprang from the opinions of the physician most conversant in such maladies; and the ardent expectation that arose from the reports of beginning convalescence; these sentiments increasing with the augmented probability of approaching recovery, until the completion of the cure turned hope and expectation into the strongest joy. Nor were external testimonies wanting to correspond with the gladdened feelings of the people: all ranks and all individuals vied with each other in rejoicings; invention was roused to devise emblems expressive of the general sympathy; and taste was employed in superadding grace and decoration to the efforts of genius which were employed to promote and heighten the prevalent passion. Illuminations received a new character, and in, addition to former mechanism, exhibited fancy, ingenuity, and design. It was not a mere blaze of light, but in many places light exhibiting a happy resemblance of the painter and sculpture's skill, and in some even of the poet's art.

His majesty goes to St. Pauls to return thanks.

His majesty was desirous of publicly testifying his gratitude to the Supreme Being for the late signal interposition of his benignant providence in removing the illness with which he had been afflicted: with this view he appointed a thanksgiving and resolved for the greater solemnity to go to St. Pauls cathedral, there to return thanks to Almighty God for his merciful goodness: the twenty-third of April was the day fixed for the purpose; and a more splendid exhibition has rarely met the public eye. The procession began with the commons, as representatives of the people of Britain; at eight o'clock the members set off in their carriages, followed by their speaker in his state coach; preceded by the masters in chancery and judges, next came the peers, the younger baron first, and the lord chancellor in his state coach closing this part of the procession: afterwards came the

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princes, escorted by parties of horse guards. Their majesties set out from the queen's palace soon after ten o'clock, in a coach drawn by eight cream coloured horses, followed by their royal highnesses the princesses, and proceeded along Pall Mall, and through the Strand, amid the loyal acclamations of a prodigious concourse of people. At Temple-bar his majesty was met by the lord mayor in a gown of crimson velvet, by the sheriffs in their scarlet robes, and a deputation from the aldermen and common councilmen, (being all on horseback) when the lord mayor surrendered the city sword to the king, who having returned it to him, he carried it bareheaded before the monarch to St. Pauls. His majesty, being come to St. Pauls, was met at the west door by the peers, the bishop of London, and the dean of St. Pauls (bishop of Lincoln), and the canons residentiary. The sword of state was carried before his majesty by the marquis of Stafford into the choir, when the king and queen placed themselves under a canopy of state, near the west end, opposite the altar. The peers had their seats in the area, as a house of lords; and the commons in the stalls. Divine service[a] being finished, the procession returned in the same order: the whole spectacle was extremely magnificent, and, viewed in combination with its objects and cause, was admirably calculated to strike every beholder of feeling and reflection with mingled joy, gratitude, and piety.

Festive rejoicings.

VERY splendid galas were given by many individuals on the auspicious occasion: the most sumptuous and magnificent was exhibited by the princess royal at Windsor; the whole disposition of the entertainment, but especially the emblematical figures, did great honour to the taste and ingenuity of its lovely and accomplished author; dresses, of which the principal characteristic was UNIFOR-

a The prayers and litany were read and chanted by the minor canons: the Te Deum and anthems composed for the occasion were sung by the choir, who were placed in the organ loft, and were joined in the chorus, as also in the psalms, by the charity children, in number about six thousand, who were assembled there, previous to his majesty's arrival; the communion service was read by the dean and residentiaries, and the sermon preached by the lord bishop of London, from Psalm xxvii 16—"O, tarry thou the Lord's leisure: be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart; and put thou thy trust in the Lord." See Annual Register, 1789. Appendix to Chronicle, p, 249.

MITY, exhibiting gracefulness and loyalty, with a beautiful VARIETY of finely fancied ornaments, exemplified Hutchinson's doctrine on the constituents of beauty.

THE French and Spanish ambassadors also gave entertainments on the same auspicious occasion; that which was exhibited by the former, both in magnificence and splendor, in beauty of decoration[b] and ingenuity of device, approached nearest to the princess's gala.

Parliamentary proceedings.

PRIVATE and public congratulations occupied, without interruption, the first week after the reestablishment of our sovereign's health was announced; and it was the middle of the second before parliamentary business was resumed. On the eighteenth of March a plan, formed by the master general of the ordnance, for fortifying the West India islands, was submitted to the house of commons; and after undergoing considerable discussion, on the same grounds as that of the former year, was adopted. A tax imposed on shops some years before, at the instance of Mr. Pitt, and assessing them in proportion to the rent of the dwellinghouse of which they made a part, had been found to fall heavily on the metropolis and other great commercial towns, where the rents of houses are necessarily high. It had been intended by legislature, that the tax should fall ultimately upon the customers; but shopkeepers alleged this object to be impracticable: they represented it as partial and oppressive, and Mr. Fox had repeatedly on these grounds applied for a repeal. This year he renewed his motion, and the house, without admitting the grievance to the alleged extent, yet wishing to satisfy so numerous and useful a body, consented to adopt the motion; and a bill for the purpose was introduced, and passed both houses unanimously.

Renewed application for the repeal of the test and corporation act.

ON the eighth of May Mr. Beaufoy again moved for the repeal of the test and corporation act, which he supported by the same arguments that he had used two years before; and was also opposed on grounds that had been

b This entertainment was given in a very large and magnificent house, which the ambassador occupied in Portman square. Among the devices was the following: on each side of the grand saloon was a transparent painting; that on the right of her majesty representing the genius of France congratulating the genius of England on the recovery of the king, an excellent likeness of whom the goddess of health held in her hand.

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formerly employed; and his motion was rejected by a majority of one hundred and twenty-two to one hundred and two. One of the principal objections to the desired repeal was, that certain classes of dissenters not only maintained principles contrary to the fundamental tenets of our faith, but declared intentions inimical to our establishment: there were other bodies of dissenters that differed from the church of England merely respecting forms: it was thought by many who belonged to neither, that if the sectaries of the latter kind had drawn a strong line between themselves and the sectaries of the former, they more readily might have experienced the indulgence of legislature. The first of these classes might be compromised under the general name of calvinists or presbyterians; they branched in a great measure from the church of Scotland, were orthodox in all the essential articles of our religion, and well affected to our constitutional establishment: the second may be comprehended under the general term of unitarians or socinians, heterodox in their opinions concerning the trinity, the divinity of Christ, the necessity of an atonement, and other important articles of christian belief: they were, beside inimical to our ecclesiastical establishment, and many of them by no means friendly to our political constitution: here was a very important difference; but there were reasons which prevented the calvinistical dissenters from exhibiting the distinction between themselves and the unitarians. If the presbyterians had the constitutional principles, the unitarians in their number comprehended the abler men: the great talents and learning of Drs. Price and Priestley had diffused their respective sentiments through many ingenious young men, not only originally of their own cast, but others bred in the strictness of presbyterian orthodoxy. It was, indeed, natural for young nonconformists, who were either really able, or aspired at the reputation of literary talents, to follow the admired genius of the heresiarchs, rather than associate with the less splendid, though more useful, teachers of the orthodox dissenters. The presbyterians possessed many respectable and some eminent preachers, well fitted for the real business of a clergyman to afford religious

nd moral instruction to a congregation;[c] but they had no rice or Priestley fitted to form great political plans, or xecute great political undertakings: they did not possess he literary activity which, by circulating arguments in vour of the dissenters, through periodical works, tended render their cause popular. From the general mass of ectarian literature and exertions, they expected they, in ommon with the rest, would ultimately obtain their ish: separated from such coadjutors, their efforts, ey knew, must be comparatively feeble, and, therefore, oncluded would be unavailing: they never tried the xperiment.

A FEW days after this motion, lord Stanhope proposed bill "for relieving members of the church of England from sundry penalties and disabilities, to which by the laws now in force they were liable, and for extending freedom in matters of religion to all persons (papists only excepted), and for other purposes therein mentioned." He presented to their lordships a sketch of all he penal laws enacted upon religion, sorcery, and various ther subjects: he insisted that it was both unjust and isgraceful to suffer these to remain amongst our statutes: e proposed, therefore, that they should be repealed; that l persons (papists expected on account of their dangerus and persecuting principles) should possess the free xercise of their faith, and by speaking, writing, and pubshing, be permitted to investigate theological subjects; y preaching and teaching to instruct persons in the duties f religion, in such manner as they should judge the most onducive to promote virtue, the happiness of society, and he eternal felicity of mankind. The bill was strongly pposed by the bishops, as tending to sweep away all orler and subordination in religion, and to substitute fanaicism; to unloose the bonds of society, and, under pretence of establishing religious liberty, to open the door to every pecies of licentiousness, neglect, and even contempt of hristianity. Dr. Horsely admitted the absurdity of some

Proposed relief of nonconformists against penal laws,

is opposed by the bishops,

c Except Drs. Price and Priestley, I do not at present recollect among the rinian and republican schismatics any persons of transcendent genius and prond erudition, who could with justice be affirmed to surpass Drs. Fordyce nd Hunter, and other presbyterians who are still alive.

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of the penal laws, and their total inapplicability to the present circumstances of society: but he objected to the bill, as he thought it would tear up the church of England from the root; and as the destruction of an ally must necessarily affect the interest and existence of the principal, it would tend to destroy the very being of the English constitution: the bill was rejected at the second reading.

and rejected.

Slave trade.

By a vote of the last session, the consideration of the slave trade having been postponed to the present, the commons intended to have resumed it early, but the unforeseen business which occupied the attention of parliament from November to March, rendered it impossible to take it into consideration, until the season was too far advanced for fully discussing such an extensive and complicated subject. The privy council had persevered in investigating the facts; from them a large and elaborate report was presented to the house, and several petitions, both for and against the proposed abolition of the slave trade, were submitted to their consideration. On the twelfth of May, Mr. Wilberforce introduced a set of resolutions, amounting to twelve, which he deduced from the report of the privy council. Africa (he said in his prefatory speech) was a country divided under many kings, governments, and laws: a great portion of that region was subjected to tyrannical dominion; men were considered merely as goods and property, and articles of sale and plunder like any other mercantile wares. The kings and princes had been purposely inspired with a fondness for our commodities: they waged war on each other, and ravaged their own country, in order to procure thereby the captivity and disposal of their countrymen; and in their courts of law many poor wretches, though innocent, were condemned to servitude. To obtain a sufficient number of slaves, thousands were kidnapped and torn from their families and their country, and sentenced to misery. All these assertions (he said)

Mr. Wilberforce's motion for the abolition.

d Lord Stanhope, replying to the bishops, said, that if the reverend bench would not suffer him to load away their rubbish by cartfulls, he would endeavour to carry it off in wheelbarrows; and if that mode should be resisted, he would take it away with a spade. Having soon after some conversation respecting the exaction of tithes from quakers, in which he differed from the chancellor, lord Stanhope said, I shall teach the noble and learned lord law, as I have this day taught the bench of bishops religion. See Parliamentary Debates.

were verified by every history of Africa, and now confirmed by the report of the privy council. He considered the subject, first, as a question of humanity; and secondly, of policy. From the evidence before the council it appeared, that the number of slaves carried away from Africa, on an average of four years, amounted to thirty-eight thousand annually: of these by far the greater part was brought from the inland country, and at a great distance from the coasts. According to the information that had been received, the persons purchased for slaves consisted chiefly of four classes: first, prisoners taken in war: secondly, persons seized for debt, or on account of real or imputed crimes, particularly adultery and witchcraft, in which cases the whole families of the captives were frequently vended for the profit of those by whom they were condemned: thirdly, domestic slaves sold for the emolument of their masters, at the will of their owner, and in some places on being condemned by them for real or imputed crimes: fourthly, persons made slaves by various acts of oppression, violence, or fraud, committed either by the princes and chiefs of those countries on their subjects, or private individuals on each other; or by Europeans engaged in this traffic. The trade carried on for the purpose of slaves had a necessary tendency to cause frequent and cruel wars among the nations; to produce unjust convictions and aggravated punishments for pretended crimes; to encourage acts of oppression, violence, and fraud; and to obstruct the natural course of civilization and improvement in those countries. He considered the subject next on the ground of policy: the continent of Africa furnished several valuable articles peculiar to that quarter of the globe, and highly important to the trade and manufactures of this kingdom. For the slave trade, there might be substituted an extensive commerce, which would equal the profits of that traffic, and would probably increase with the civilization and improvement that would proceed from the abolition of such a barbarous and depopulating merchandise. The infectious distempers arising from the confinement of the negroes rendered the slave trade more destructive to British seamen, than other kinds of commerce on the same coasts, or in equally torrid

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latitudes. The mode of conveying blacks from Africa necessarily exposed them to many grievous sufferings, which no regulation could prevent: on their passage, and in the West Indies, before they were sold, great numbers perished, and proportionably diminished the value of the cargo: diseases prevailed with peculiar severity among negroes newly imported, and the number of deaths far exceeded the usual mortality of natives. The natural increase of population among negroes in our plantations was impeded by the inequality of the sexes in the importations from Africa; the general dissoluteness of manners, and the want of proper regulations for the encouragement of marriages, obstructed the nourishment of healthy children; hence, he concluded, that if we obviated the causes which had hitherto obstructed the natural increase of negroes in the West Indies, and established regulations respecting their food, health, and labour, without diminishing the profits of the planter, no inconsiderable or permanent inconvenience would result from discontinuing the farther importation of African slaves. All impartial hearers, or readers capable of comprehending and appreciating Mr. Wilberforce's view of the slave trade, whatever their opinions might be concerning the evidence on which he grounded his reasoning, agreed in esteeming the present speech and propositions the ablest, fullest, and most masterly exhibition of the reasons for abolishing the traffic, that had been presented on that important subject. The defenders of the traffic did not then enter minutely into the question, but confining themselves to some general animadversions, postponed a detailed answer to the following session; to which period it was settled that farther consideration should be deferred: meanwhile, the bill brought in by sir William Dolben for regulating the transportation of slaves from Africa to the West India islands, was by another act continued and amended.

The question is postponed to the following session.

In the beginning of June, lord Sidney resigned the office of secretary of state for the home department, and Mr. Grenville was appointed to supply his place. The speaker's chair being thus vacant, Mr. Henry Addington, member for Berkshire, was proposed for that office by the friends of the ministers, and sir Gilbert Elliot by oppo-

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sition: the election was carried in favour of Mr. Addington, by a majority of two hundred and fifteen to one hundred and forty-two. On the eleventh of June, Mr. Pitt opened to the house his financial scheme for the year: the permanent income declared necessary by the committee of 1786 to defray the annual demands, was 15,500,000l.; for the last two years the income had exceeded that sum 78,000l., but the expenses of the preceding year, the armament, the discharge of the prince of Wales's debts, the sums bestowed on the loyalists, and other unforeseen contingencies, had greatly exceeded the usual peace establishment: from these causes the total amount of the supplies required for the current year amounted to 5,730,000l., besides the annual renewal of exchequer bills: the minister informed the house, that to provide this supply, in addition to the usual resources, a loan for a million would be necessary: this sum he proposed to borrow on a tontine, by which means the incumbrance would in time be removed without any permanent augmentation of the public debt. As the necessity of the loan arose, not from a defalcation of income, but from temporary increase of expenditure, the minister contended, that no fair argument could be adduced from it, tending to discredit accounts that our finances were flourishing, or to diminish the probability of reducing the national incumbrances. To pay the interest of four and a half per cent. for the sum now borrowed, and also to supply the deficiency of 56,000l. incurred by the repeal of the shop tax, Mr. Pitt stated, that new taxes would be wanted to the amount of 100,000l.; for this purpose he proposed to add one halfpenny to the stamp duties on every newspaper, and six-pence additional on each advertisement; fresh duties also upon cards and dice, upon probates of wills, and upon horses and carriages. The ingenuity of Mr. Sheridan endeavoured to establish the following propositions: that, for the three last years, the expenditure has exceeded the income two millions, and may be expected to do so for three years to come: that no progress has hitherto been made in the reduction of the public debt: that there is no ground for rational expectation that any progress can be made without a con-

Mr. Grenville is appointed secretary of state, and Mr. Addington succeeds him as speaker.

Financial scheme.

A loan is required (according to the minister) from a temporary cause.

Mr. Sheridan disputes his calculations

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siderable increase of the annual income, or reduction of the expenses. The committee had declared upon a comparison between the income and expenditure, that the former would be adequate to the latter without a loan: a loan had, however, taken place. The committee had declared that the annual income would amount to a specific sum; but on an average of three years there had been a deficiency: that the expenditure exceeded the income he endeavoured to prove from calculating probabilities, instead of detailing items; and adopted the same hypothetical mode of argument to support his other positions.[e] In stating both income and expenditure, he took into the account on the one hand the year 1786 of diminished productiveness from a temporary cause, the reduction of duties, in consequence of a commercial treaty, that so soon compensated this diminution of receipt: on the other the year of 1788, a period of expenditure beyond the usual demands in time of peace; and thus endeavoured to make subjects specially circumstanced the foundation of a general average. Mr. Grenville, from plain facts and authentic documents, detected, and clearly exposed the sophistical reasoning of extraordinary genius, exercised in forming an hypothesis inimical to political adversaries.[f]

Bill for subjecting tobacco to an excise.

To increase the revenue by the farther prevention of frauds, Mr. Pitt proposed a bill for transferring the duties on tobacco from the customs to the excise: tobacco, being a commodity of general consumption, might be rendered a productive source of revenue, but under the present regulations and duties was an article of smuggling, and indeed the principal subject of contraband trade, since the late act concerning tea, wines, and spirits. It appeared on inquiry and investigation, that one half of the tobacco consumed in the kingdom was smuggled, and that the revenue was defrauded by this means to the amount of nearly 300,000l. To remedy this evil the most effectual means would be to subject the greater part of the duty on tobacco to the survey of excise: the peculiar benefit of

e See Parliamentary Debates, June 11, 1789.
f See Parliamentary Debates, June 11, 1789.

as change in the mode of collection, as a detail of the ceeds proved, had been very clearly exemplified in the icle of wine: the manufacturers would no doubt make jections to the present proposition, as dealers in wine d done respecting the change in the duties upon their erchandise: but though they were to be heard with ndour, assertions affecting their own interests were to be rutinized with strictness, and to be no farther admitted an they were supported with collateral proof. While the ill affecting their commodity was pending, dealers in wine ad asserted confidently, that, under the restrictions, they ould not carry on their trade: the house at that time ought their reasoning insufficient, and tried the experiment; the result had been, that the trade had increased an astonishing degree. The plan was controverted on neral and special ground; by exposing British subjects summary inspection and summary trials, the extension the excise laws was inconsistent with the principles of e constitution: there was a peculiar hardship in subjecting this manufacture to the excise, and the total loss of e trade itself would probably be the consequence: the riations in the weight of tobacco, during the process of manufacture, were so inconceivably great, and at the me time so uncertain, that it would be impossible for the ficers of the excise to take any account of stock, which ight not subject the retailer, on the one hand, to a inous excess of duty, or on the other, to fines and forfeitures equally pernicious: there were, moreover, valuable ecrets possessed by manufacturers of tobacco and snuff;[g] hese would be inevitably exposed to the discovery of xcisemen, among whom there might be persons capable f profiting by such an opportunity. A loud clamour was choed through the country against the extension of the xcise, as an unconstitutional and oppressive measure, and n infraction of British liberty; but such trite declamation id not influence legislature. The bill, in its passage rough the houses, underwent various modifications; fter which it received the royal assent.

Popular clamour against it:

It is passed into a law.

g Some of these, it was affirmed, had been purchased at upwards of 10,000l.

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Progressive prosperity of India stated by Mr. Dundas.

On the first of July Mr. Dundas presented to the house a statement of Indian finance: from this account it appeared, that the annual revenues, after defraying the expense of the different settlements, amounted to 1,848,000l. that the interest of the debt was 480,700l. and the principal 7,604,000l.; the excess of the revenue beyond the interest was 1,367,300l. to be applied to the liquidation of their debt. A petition was soon after presented from the company, praying that they might be permitted to add one million to their capital stock. This application was supported by Mr. Dundas, who affirmed that, upon a supposition of the final extinction of their charter in 1794, their effects in Europe would overbalance their debts by the sum of 350,000l.; and that with respect to their debts in India they would go along with the territory, and be very readily undertaken by those into whosesoever hands the possession of that territory might come. A bill to enable the company to carry the prayer of their petition into effect was brought in, and passed through both houses with little opposition.

Slow progress of Mr. Hastings's trial.

The trial of Mr. Hastings proceeded very slowly; it was the twentieth of April before the court was resumed and a charge was then opened by Mr. Burke, relative to the corrupt receipt of money. In the course of this accusation, having occasion to mention Nundcomar, Mr. Burke said, that Mr. Hastings had murdered Nundcomar by the hands of sir Elijah Impey. As the proceedings concerning this rajah made no part of the charges which the managers were appointed to conduct against Mr. Hastings, the defendant petitioned the house either to bring forward and prosecute the allegation in a specific article, or to restrain their manager from assertions totally irrelevant to the business intrusted to the prosecutors. A proposition of censure was moved against Mr. Burke, as having exceeded the authority vested in him by the commons, and employed words which ought not to have been used. The motion occasioned a warm debate, in which the supporters of Mr. Burke contended, that the complaint was made for the purpose of disgusting the managers with the office which they had undertaken; that if admitted it would so narrow

their ground of procedure as to defeat the purposes of justice. Those who thought his expressions blamable, insisted that in no criminal process could the imputation of a crime not prosecuted, and consequently by the law presumed not to exist, tend to the attainment of justice. The matter of the charges was definite: to them only was the accuser to speak, and to them only could the defendant answer: an assertion of extraneous guilt without an opportunity of denial, tended to produce an unfavourable impression that might affect the opinion of some judges on the real matter of the charges. The proposed motion, introduced by the marquis of Graham, was carried by a majority of one hundred and thirty-five. The proceedings respecting Mr. Hastings underwent very virulent invectives in periodical journals: one of these had the hardihood to assert, that "the trial of Mr. Hastings was to be put "off to another session, unless the house of lords had "spirit enough to put an end *to so shameful a business!*" This paragraph being complained of in the house, it was unanimously agreed the attorney general should be directed to prosecute the printer.[h] A bill was this year introduced into parliament to establish a perpetual anniversary thanksgiving to Almighty God, for having by the glorious revolution delivered this nation from arbitrary power, and to commemorate annually the confirmation of the people's rights. After passing the house of commons it was rejected by the lords, on the ground of being unnecessary, as the service of the fifth of November had been altered for the express purpose of commemorating that glorious event.

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On the eleventh of August ended the longest session which the history has hitherto recorded, after having continued almost nine months without interruption. The chancellor, by his majesty's command, prorogued the

h In the course of the conversation to which this motion gave rise, Mr. Burke read from one of the public prints a curious paper, purporting to be a bill of charges made by the editor upon major Scott, for sundry articles inserted in the paper on his account. They chiefly consisted of speeches, letters, and paragraphs composed by him; and amongst the rest was this singular article: *For attacking the veracity of Mr. Burke*, 3s. 6d.

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houses, and delivered a short speech containing his majesty's thanks for the attention manifested to public business, and the supplies which were granted: though the good offices of his majesty and his allies had not hitherto been effectual for restoring the general tranquillity, yet the farther extension of hostilities had been prevented, and the situation of affairs abroad promised to this country the uninterrupted enjoyment of peace.

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Continental affairs.—The year 1789 eventful to the civilized world.—Change in the relative policy of France and Austria.—Profound policy of Kaunitz in the treaty of Austria with France.—Imperial confederacy—produces the defensive alliance of Britain, Holland, and Prussia.—State of the belligerent powers.—Character of the sultan.—His death.—Succeeded by Selim.—Change of counsel, and effects on military operations.—Successes of the Russians and Austrians.—They respectively capture Bender and Belgrade.—Ottoman empire in danger.—Sweden.—Distresses of Gustavus.—Efforts of his genius and courage for extrication.—Miners of Dalecarlia.—The Danes invade Sweden.—British policy induces the Danes to retreat.—Gustavus suppresses mutiny and faction.—He confirms his popularity.—He directs his whole energies against Russia.—Military and naval campaign between Sweden and Russia.—Commotions in the Netherlands.—State and constitution of these provinces.—Joseph's violent desire of change under the name of reform.—Innovations in the ecclesiastical establishment.—Suppression of religious orders,—and confiscation of their property.—Suppression of ancient, venerated, and beneficial customs.—Change of judicial forms and proceedings.—Arbitrary system introduced.—Subversion of the established legislature.—Progress of despotism trampling liberty and franchises.—Joseph considers his Flemish subjects merely as sources of revenue.—Remonstrances of the Netherlanders.—Meeting of the States.—Deputies are sent to Vienna.—Joseph pretends to grant their requests.—Sends general Dalton to the Netherlands.—Despotic conduct of that officer.—Effects of his tyranny.—Farther cruelty and robbery by Joseph.—The Flemmings resolve on forcible resistance.—Declaration of rights.—The patriots defeat the Austrian troops.—They form themselves into a federal republic.

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1789 eventful to the civilized world.

THE summer of 1789 teemed with events of greater importance to the civilized world, than any which are recorded in modern history. Causes that had long secretly operated and gradually increased in force, now manifested themselves in the most stupendous effects. Before, however, the history proceeds to the principal transaction which will render the year 1789 for ever memorable, it is proper to carry the narrative to other subjects that may illustrate the collateral and relative state of other countries at the time in which a system commenced, that changed not only the policy but the opinion, sentiments, and character of continental Europe.

Changes in the relative policy of France and Austria.

DURING the last thirty years a very important alteration had taken place in the political relations of the continent. Through a great part of the sixteenth century, and the whole of the seventeenth, the wars which agitated the christian world arose chiefly from the contending ambition of France and of Austria. At the accession of the house of Bourbon, both the royal and imperial princes of Austria had begun to decline from that power which the family had possessed under one head. The infatuated bigotry of Philip undid much of what the skilful policy of Charles had done: nevertheless, the dynasty, in the dominions of both the sovereigns retained a power very formidable to their neighbours. To impair the strength of the house of Austria was the principal object of Henry IV. in his foreign politics. His successors, as we have seen[i] throughout the seventeenth century, pursued this policy, and with such efficacy as to render the French monarchy far superior to the combined dominions of the two Austrian branches. In the successive wars of Lewis the XIII. and XIV. against Spain and Austrian Germany, France made large acquisitions; and that war, which was more fatal to her than any which she had encountered in modern times, secured to her princes the kingdom and dominions of Spain. This was the most disastrous blow which France ever gave to the house of Austria, and appeared to threaten her rapid humiliation. But the maritime ambition of France having driven her to pernicious con-

i See the introduction to this history.

tests with England, arrested the progress of her continental advantages:[k] she required a long interval of peace after the death of Lewis XIV. to recruit her strength; and at the demise of the emperor Charles VI. she was recovered from her losses, and sufficiently potent to annoy her neighbours. A new cooperator now arose against the house of Austria; the king of Prussia on the one side aggrandized himself at the expense of Maria Theresa, while France pressed her on the other; and at the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle the empress queen found her hereditary dominions curtailed, and her strength impaired. For a century and a half Austria had been progressively losing; her maritime ally had been uniformly victorious: but the naval triumphs of Britain had not averted disaster from Austria. Such was the general series of policy and events when Kaunitz came to be the minister of the empress queen. The penetrating and comprehensive genius of that celebrated statesman saw, that in the whole result of contention Austria was really not a match for France: and that if she persisted in enmity to that kingdom, she not only would be totally unable to recover her losses, but must incur greater. He conceived a design which, he trusted, would restore the splendor of Austria, and might permit France to embark in projects that he knew to be agreeable to her inclinations, but was convinced would reduce her resources, and leave to her less strength for continental advancement.[l] Hence arose the treaty of 1756 with France, which suffered Austria, instead of acting on the defensive, to resume her offensive ambition; and though her projects were defeated for the time by the genius and heroism of Frederic, yet her means of influence and aggrandizement were essentially increased by her amity with France. The want of a continental rival encouraged France to direct her principal efforts to a favourite object, that she never could nor can obtain: she hoped to overpower the naval strength of the mistress of the ocean: failed in the extravagant and impracticable attempts, and

Profound policy of Kaunitz in the treaty of Austria with France.

k The impolicy of the French contests with England is placed in a very striking light by Soulavie, a writer now at the court of Bonaparte. See his memoirs of Lewis XVI. *passim*.

l See Soulavie's Memoirs of Lewis XVI. vol. iii. chap. viii.

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wasted at sea that strength which might have made her irresistible by land; and thus the diminution of the resources and power of France was, as Kaunitz foresaw,[m] the consequence of her connexion with her ancient rival, while Austria by the exhaustion of her neighbour was able to avail herself of the plundering projects of Russia and Prussia; by dismemberment of Poland was evidently one fruit of 's scheme. By the American war France was so enfeebled, as in a great degree to have lost her foriency on the continent of Europe. The ancient ent of Austrian ambition having thus discontinued efforts, Joseph now hoped by his cooperation with the ier principal potentate of the continent, that he would are the spoils of the Turkish empire, strip Prussia of ner late acquisitions, extend the Austrian influence in Germany, and raise his family to an extent of dominion and splendor unparalleled since Charles V. In this expectation he had commenced the war, and notwithstanding the untoward events of the preceding campaign, he still trusted that he would ultimately succeed in his projects of lawless spoliation. The principle of British interference in continental politics was uniform: to prevent any other potentate from acquiring such an accession of power as might endanger the independence of Europe, and the security of these realms. The application of this principle led the English cabinet to inspirit measures of defence against the imperial aggressors; and in such circumstances to combine with Prussia, which was the most interested, disposed, and able to repel the ambitious confederacy. Frederic William very readily assented; thence arose the defensive alliance whose political counsels and efforts directed and invigorated the military preparations of the nations that were at war with Austria and Russia; but the ignorance and barbarity of one of the belligerent maintainers of national independence, prevented her from steadily following the advice of British wisdom.

produces defensive alliance of Britain, Holland, and Prussia.

State of the belligerent powers.

We left the emperor returned to Vienna, with disappointment and disgust, because a war contrary to justice and policy had produced disaster and disgrace; Russia

m See Soulavie *passim*.

profiting by his efforts, in employing so great a part of the strength of her enemy, and enabled to make a powerful impression on the Turkish dominions. Notwithstanding the loss of Oczakow, the campaign of 1788 had been on the whole favourable to the Ottomans: the advantages on the Danube compensated the loss upon the Niester. The ability of the vizier had invigorated and formed his troops, restored the military character of the Ottomans, and displayed itself in policy as well as in war: but the talents and virtues of this minister were misrepresented by envy, and misapprehended by ignorance: conduct, not only wise but necessary, was imputed to weakness and pusillanimity. One man, however, at court was able to appreciate his merit; this was the sultan himself, Abdulhamet, a prince of a very different character from those who usually filled the Turkish throne: far from the gross ignorance that commonly marked the Ottoman despots, he was distinguished for intelligence and information: instead of ferocity, cruelty, and barbarity, leading features in his character were humanity and beneficence: he was conversant in the languages and sciences of several christian countries: he spoke the Italian, Spanish, and French tongues with considerable fluency, and understood them all perfectly; he delighted greatly in perusing European books, and conversing with European men; and his favourite subjects of discourse and study were history and politics. Such abilities, acquirements, and dispositions, were not the most favourable to admiration, of either the gloomy superstition or savage despotism of his empire. As a prudent sovereign, he scrupulously adhered to the established forms of his country's religion; but by persons who were well acquainted with his acuteness, he was conjectured not to be without a perception of its absurdities: he saw and deeply lamented the dreadful vices of the Turkish government and institutions, but knew them to be so intervoven with the sentiments, opinions,[n] and characters of mussulmen, that any attempt to effect a reform would be unavailing, until the people themselves should undergo a complete revolution; what he could not

Character of the sultan.

n Annual Register, 1789.

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correct in principle, he endeavoured to moderate in practice; to improve his subjects, and to prepare them gradually for beneficial change, he encouraged industry and the arts, agriculture, commerce, and manufactures. He abhorred the janizaries, as a body of men insolent and oppressive to his subjects, and dangerous to himself; and had projected the formation of a regular army on the European model, which might have afforded the means of internal tranquillity and of defence from foreign attack, without enslaving the people and endangering the sovereign. In his grand vizier he found a very able counsellor and coadjutor: when that officer returned from the army to the capital, a violent faction having sought his destruction, the sultan ordered him to be arrested, not with a view to inflict summary punishment, according to the usual mode of the Turkish emperors, but to make him stand a fair and impartial trial: the result was an honourable acquittal; soon after which he returned to the army to make dispositions for the approaching campaign. On the seventeenth of April, 1789, the Turkish empire experienced a misfortune, productive in its consequences of the greatest calamities and humiliation; Abdulhamet being suddenly seized with a fit in the street, dropped down, and after languishing a few hours expired. He was succeeded by his nephew Selim, of whom great hopes had been entertained, as he was educated under the eye and direction of his excellent uncle: but the first act of his reign by no means confirmed the expectations in his favour; the most tyrannical rapacity manifested itself in his conduct: its first victim was Jussu Pacha, the illustrious grand vizier; this minister possessing wealth to the amount of about a million sterling, was seized at the head of the grand army, conveyed prisoner to Constantinople, sentenced to banishment and the forfeiture of his treasures: on his way to his place of exile he was murdered, his head was brought in triumph to the sultan, and by his orders hung up to grace the gates of the seraglio. Confiscation and execution were the daily acts of the young despot; every wise measure of his uncle was changed, and, except the grand admiral, every able officer and wise counsellor was displaced: the Turkish empire rising to ancient glory

His death.

Succeeded by Selim.

under the wisdom and virtue of one ruler, was, by the vice and folly of another, soon precipitated to a lower abyss of disgrace and disaster than it had ever experienced. The bashaw of Widin was appointed grand vizier, and soon showed how totally unqualified he was to supply the place of his predecessor. As the preceding campaign had been successful against the emperor, and unsuccessful against the Russians, the late vizier had proposed for the present campaign an offensive war against the Austrians, to improve the advantages already obtained, and a defensive warfare against the Russians, to prevent their farther progress : the young sultan and his minister to show that they would be governed entirely by their own counsels, reversed the plans of their predecessors, and by a most preposterous policy, determined to attack the conquerors, and defend themselves against the vanquished ;° and on this scheme they concerted their operations. The grand vizier promised to retrieve Oczakow, and marched northward for that purpose : the Russians, under general Kamenskoi, being placed on the borders of Bessarabia, not only protected Oczakow, but endangered Bender : the grand Russian army, under the princes Potemkin and Repnin, was stationed between the Bog and the Neister, to cover their late conquest and make farther advances. A plan of much better concert was this year contrived and executed between the Austrians and Russians, than in the former : the emperor prepared as before, four armies ; his own health did not admit of his taking the command in person, but he prevailed on old marshal Haddick to head his grand army, which was destined to act in the neighbourhood of Belgrade. The troops next in force, the scene of whose exertions was to be the northwest frontiers of Turkey near Croatia and the river Save, he placed under marshal Loudon : the prince of Saxe Coburg took the lead on the side of Moldavia, and cooperated with the Russian general Suwarrow ; between him and the grand Austrian army the prince Hohenloe commanded on the frontiers of Wallachia to carry on a war of posts and skirmishes, and to act in concert with either the forces to his right or left,

Change of counsels and effects on military operations.

Successes of the Russians and Austrians.

o See Annual Register, 1789, chap. vii.

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as occasion might require; thus, from Oczakow to Dalmatia, from the northern extremity of the Euxine to the Adriatic, a line of armies extended along the whole frontier of Turkey, amounting to three hundred thousand brave men, well disciplined, commanded by skilful generals, and so stationed as to act with the most perfect concert. Against such a confederacy of force and skill had the Turks to contend; by wickedness and infatuation, deprived of the leaders and counsellors who could have best directed their efforts. The prince of Saxe Coburg first revived the honour of the Austrian arms in this war: a Turkish general, at the head of an army of thirty thousand men, encamped near Focksan, a fortified town in Wallachia. The prince of Coburg, with a much inferior force, attacked him in his camp, and gained a complete victory himself, with a number of his troops, took seven prisoners; above five thousand were killed or captured; the whole camp, artillery and baggage, with the town of Focksan, fell into the hands of the conquerors. In Bessarabia the Turks engaged in a number of small and desultory battles, in which they were generally defeated. The vizier seeing no hopes of making good his boast respecting Oczakow, in the month of August, with the grand Turkish army, took a western direction, and came to the heart of Wallachia. The prince of Saxe Coburg and marshal Suwarrow, having marched southwards with an army consisting of near thirty thousand men, attacked the Turkish host, that amounted to ninety thousand, near Martineste, and with little difficulty or loss, gained one of the most signal victories recorded in modern history; ten thousand were killed on the spot, the rout and dispersion was complete cessation of pursuit from the conquerors only saved the slaughter from being general; and the whole camp, including the grand vizier's tent and equipage, an immense quantity of stores, furniture, provisions, and ammunition, were among the spoils of the conquerors. The fugitives hastened across the Danube, execrating their general, to whose folly and misconduct they imputed their disaster; they reminded him of his boasts, and compared these with

his actual performance.[p] The victors pursuing their advantage, captured Bucharest, the capital of Wallachia, with the fortress of Cyernitz, and reduced the greater part of the province, Near Bender the Turks displayed great valour in several encounters under Hassan Bey; but engaging in a pitched battle, after a very obstinate contest, they were entirely defeated: in consequence of this victory prince Potemkin laid siege to Bender, which, after having vigorously defended itself, surrendered in the month of November. On the western frontiers of the Turkish empire, the most important enterprises were undertaken on the side of Croatia: marshal Laudohn began the campaign with besieging Gradisca, which in the former year had so vigorously withstood the Austrian attacks; on the twentieth of June, instead of regularly constructing lines of circumvallation, he commenced a violent cannonade and bombardment: the Turks were so much intimidated, that on the second day they evacuated the place: they had, indeed, no confidence in the present commander in chief, the grand vizier, and predestination, mingling with their dejection, on account of so many disasters, they conceived that every attempt against the Russians and Austrians would be totally useless, and that fate had decreed they were to be vanquished: this superstition had a very powerful influence on their conduct, and greatly contributed to the victories of their enemies. After his success at Gradisca, Laudohn made preparations for the siege of Belgrade: the Turks were so dismayed, that an operose attack was not necessary: the systematic and steady adherence of the Germans to precedent, however, made them employ the same time and labour in dispositions for this enterprise, that would have been wanted in quite different circumstances, and quite different sentiments of the enemy. Formerly in besieging Belgrade great numbers of boats had been employed by the Austrians in order to oppose

They respectively capture Bender and Belgrade.

p So blindly and stupidly arrogant was this weak, headstrong, and ignorant man, that, when he took the command of the army, he caused an immense quantity of iron chains to be made, in order to manacle the legions of Austrian and Russian prisoners, whom he expected to drive before him to Constantinople, as monuments of triumph. At the close of the campaign he was beheaded. See Annual Register, 1789.

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multitudes of boats employed by the Turks in its defence: at present the Ottomans had on the Danube no nautical force of the kind: the Germans, however, proceeded upon their general principle, both in war and politics, authority and precedent; and like other votaries of the same rules of reasoning, did not very nicely investigate the case; prince Eugene, they said, employed boats in besieging Belgrade; therefore we must use them also: in making preparations upon this principle, so much time elapsed, that it was the twelfth of September before the Austrians invested the place: the trenches were speedily opened, and the batteries constructed; and after a defence of about eighteen days the town was taken by assault. Thus the principal fortresses on the Turkish frontiers fell under the arms of Austria and of Russia; the Turkish troops were defeated, and believing themselves victims of all powerful destiny, were filled with consternation and dismay; they could no longer bear the sight of their enemy, and any small Austrian or Russian detachment was sufficient to disperse any number of those who attempted to form a body: winter only seemed to retard the subversion of the Ottoman empire.

Ottoman empire in danger.

Sweden.

WHILE the Russians were making rapid stretches to the attainment of their grand objects in the south, their active, enterprising, and intrepid foe in the north afforded them considerable annoyance. Gustavus, when about to commence hostilities with Russia, had employed great pains to convince the court of Denmark, that it was the common interest of both kingdoms to oppose the encroaching politics of Catharine. There were, however, several obstacles to a confederation between Denmark and Sweden. The very year in which Gustavus had accomplished a revolution in his own country, great discontents having arisen in Norway, the king of Sweden had studiously fomented them, and almost succeeded in exciting an insurrection. Though the discovery of the design by the court of Copenhagen, before it was ripe for execution, prevented it from being accomplished, yet Denmark had ever since regarded Sweden with a very watchful and jealous eye: Catharine, on the other hand, had cultivated the friendship of the Danish court with the

closest assiduity: she had sacrificed to Denmark patrimonial rights and inheritances of person in the dutchies of Sleswick and Holstein, and thereby enabled the Danes to round their dominions on the side of Germany. In addition to the general policy by which Catharine established powerful partisans in the neighbouring courts, this conduct enhanced the connexion that had long subsisted between Denmark and Russia. The king of Sweden, by subsequent attentions, endeavoured to obliterate in Denmark his measures respecting Norway. On the commencement of the Turkish war he paid a very unexpected visit at Copenhagen; and endeavoured fully to conciliate the court and nation, and to impress them with an opinion of the danger that must accrue to smaller powers from the ambition of Russia. The court of Denmark could not perceive any of those dangers, which so deeply affected the Swedish king; and accordingly treated, and seemed to consider them as entirely visionary, and mere creatures of his imagination. They lamented that he should entertain intentions of involving himself in so unequal and ruinous a contest, and endeavoured strongly to dissuade him from such an undertaking.[q] Although the king was unmoved by their arguments, yet he did not entertain the most distant idea of any connexion subsisting between Denmark and Russia. Catharine, however, had been so successful in her intrigues at the court of Denmark, that she prevailed on the prince regent to conclude a treaty, by which he bound himself to assist Russia with a certain number of forces, should she be involved in a war with Sweden. Gustavus having no apprehension of hostilities from Denmark, when preparing to open the campaign in Finland, had drawn away his forces to that quarter, and left the vicinity of Norway defenceless; when he was involved in all the trouble and danger occasioned by the refractoriness, or rather the revolt of his army in Finland. The court of Copenhagen issued a public notice to the foreign ministers, and among the rest to the Swedish, who was most immediately concerned, of the conditions by which she was bound to Russia, to supply her with a con-

q See Annual Register 1789.

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Distresses of Gustavus.

siderable auxiliary force by sea and land, and of her determination to fulfil those conditions. This denu tion was soon followed by an invasion of Sweden on side of Norway in September 1788. In this distre situation, Gustavus, surrounded by enemies, and des by his own troops, appeared overwhelmed with ruin. contagion from the army had spread through various of the kingdom, and infected even the capital; whil nobility seemed fast approaching to the recovery of former power and consequence in the nation. The se was eagerly disposed to resume its ancient authority the circumstances of the time, the deplorable state of king's affairs, together with the prevalent dispositio the nobility, rendered them confident of success; the cordingly took measures, without consulting the kin assemble in diet the states of the kingdom, under co of considering the deranged and dangerous state of pu affairs, the discontents and disorders which prevaile the nation. Before this design was executed, the arrived at Stockholm; knowing, that though the nob were inimical to his interests, the burghers and pe were warmly attached to him, he summoned an asse of citizens; he therein declared, that reposing the unbounded confidence in their affection, loyalty, valour, and being himself called to oppose an unexpe enemy, he should intrust the defence and preservatio the capital, the protection of the queen and famil their faithful zeal. Such an important trust, and sa deposit, inspired the generous plebeians with an en siastic desire of showing themselves worthy of the r confidence; they immediately embodied themselves, cheerfully performed all the duties of soldiers. Gusta meanwhile, sent an answer to the intimation of Denm he expressed his astonishment that, when peace and fri ship had subsisted for sixty years between the two po without interruption, and he himself had employed utmost endeavours to preserve a harmony so benefici both parties, his Danish majesty should have comme hostilities: he knew nothing of the engagements subsi between Denmark and Russia, but he now desired the court of Copenhagen a direct explanation of its in

Effects of his genius and courage for extrication.

tions, whether Denmark meant only to act as an auxiliary, by furnishing a stipulated force, or intended direct aggression against Sweden? If the latter was their resolution, he must consider the war as commenced, and act accordingly. Were so unjustifiable a measure, adopted, other powers, he insinuated, would, for their own security, interfere to prevent the advances of such ambitious rapacity. The prince regent of Denmark in reply declared, that he had no intention of interfering in the war, any farther than he was bound to Russia by a treaty concluded in 1781, long before hostilities were in contemplation, and that he would not exceed the force therein stipulated; he expressed his earnest desire for the restoration of peace. Meanwhile, the new treaty between Great Britain and Prussia began to unfold its objects, to the great encouragement of all those states that wished to preserve the balance of Europe from being overturned by the imperial confederacy. France, the old ally of Sweden, being unable to afford any assistance, he now looked for support and protection to the wise and vigorous policy of the defensive alliance, and with confident expectations of ultimate success.

Miners of Dalecarlia.

On the confines of Norway, is the province of Dalecarlia, memorable in Swedish history for having afforded shelter and concealment to the celebrated Gustavus Vasa, when flying from the Danish usurpers, and for having begun the revolution which placed that hero on the throne of his ancestors. The inhabitants, sunk in their mines among the rocks and mountains, and secluded from the rest of the world, are ignorant and rough; but hardened by climate, situation, and pursuit, are strong and valiant, and have the honesty and hospitality of generous barbarians: from their ancestors they inherit the warmest loyalty and attachment to their sovereigns; their native courage operating upon this principle induces them with the promptest heroism to abandon mines and forests whenever their king requires their assistance. To these gallant rustics Gustavus had recourse; he followed the example of his illustrious namesake, and descended to desert mines and caverns to visit the loyal heroes. The second appearance of a king in these recesses, also a Gustavus, and come to solicit their assistance, recalled traditionary

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glory to the miners of Dalecarlia: they anticipated application of their sovereign; eagerly proffered services to defend their prince, and inflict vengeance the Danes, towards whom they cherished an hereditary hatred ever since the time that they tyrannized over den. The king having testified his gratitude for loyal and affectionate offers, limited his request to thousand men. This body was immediately equi attend their monarch, and though by no means all p ded with regular arms,[r] yet, furnished with such wea as they could procure, and inspired with loyalty, vigorous bodies and intrepid courage, they were a fe dable band.

The Danes invade Sweden.

THE Danes, meanwhile, entered Sweden from east part of Norway, under prince Charles of Hesse marching along the seacoast, captured Stramstead, penetrated as far as Gottenburgh, the principal po Sweden for foreign commerce; and the governor about to surrender by an inglorious capitulation: G vus was aware of the danger of this valuable city, and s ble that, before he could bring his troops to its relief capture might be effected, in order to inspire the in tants by his presence, he hastened to the place alone, travelling night and day, arrived a few hours afte determination to surrender. The king immediately placed the governor, and having assembled a meeti the citizens, by the powers of his persuasive eloqu so inspirited them with courage and confidence, that resolved to defend the city to the last extremity. force, however, of the Danish army, and the absen the Swedish troops, rendered the success of the defe very improbable. In this critical situation, the protecting policy of Britain, that has uniformly sup ed the weak against the strong, interfered for the pr vation of Gustavus. There being no ambassador either Britain or Prussia at the court of Stockholm,

British policy induces the Danes to retreat.

r The author of the Annual Register for 1788, in this part of his na observes: "They formed a grotesque appearance; some, whose famil preserved the rusty uncouth weapons of antiquity, gloried in the pos and fancied themselves thoroughly equipt for war; but the greater numb no other resource than those rustic instruments of labour used in the m in husbandry, which seemed the best calculated for their purpose."

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liot, envoy at Copenhagen, was sent to the Swedish ag delegate of the allied powers, and to mediate be- een the belligerent parties. Mr. Elliot sent a letter in s new character from Gottenburgh to prince Charles, forming him that the allied powers had sent a courier the empress to demand a general armistice; meanwhile, desired a particular truce, until the effect of the plication to Petersburgh should be known. Prince harles, answered, that he should not suspend hostilities ithout the express orders of his court; Mr. Elliot, in ply, informed him, that if the army which he com- anded, proceeded farther in offensive operations against weden, Prussia would attack Denmark by land, and ngland would attack her by sea; but that he hoped the rince royal, regent of Denmark, would adopt such mea- ures as would prevent the farther effusion of blood. his notification was not without effect: the Danish gen- ral, instead of pressing the siege, sent to his court for structions. The firm and determined remonstrances f the British ambassador, supported by the strongest nd most convincing arguments, manifesting the wise and id comprehensive principles of the allied powers, and ie real interests of Denmark, so deeply impressed the ince regent, that he agreed to conclude a short armis- ce; after that a longer; and lastly for six months. The anish army departed from Sweden; but the proffered ediation of the defensive alliance was refused by Russia. reed by the intervention of the protecting confederacy om the invasion of the Danes, Gustavus had in winter is ure to attend to the internal affairs of his kingdom, id to make preparations for the campaign. He had still ry great difficulties to encounter: his army had not only fused to fight in his cause, but actually concluded an mistice with Russia without his consent. The party of is subjects connected with his mighty enemy was ex- emely powerful and desirous of exerting their strength, effecting a revolution which would totally overturn the yal authority. In this state of affairs peace must have een of all things the most desirable to the king, and the ost suitable to his circumstances; but his potent enemy as too haughty, and too implacable in her resentments, to

Gustavus suppresses mutiny and faction.

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[illegible] now to accommodation on any terms of she knew his situation, and the advantages might derive from his embarrassments; so that animosity and political interest dictated the same The king saw that, desirable as peace would be, equitable terms, it could then be attained only by ting to conditions disgraceful and ruinous: of t exile war was the smaller; he had no alternative, b to surrender his crown to disaffected nobles, and bitious Catharine, or by magnanimous efforts to lish foreign and domestic enemies. In order with Russia, Gustavus had two great objects to b only accomplished, the subjection of the mutino and the coercion of the rebellious aristocracy. T an elasticity in vigorous minds which apportions difficulty, and in pressing emergencies produces beyond the previous conception of powers. In gencies Gustavus felt that his invention was fer courage undaunted, and his magnanimity elev knew that by a great majority of his subjects he loved and revered: in his own genius and fortitu in the affection of his people, he sought and fo sources. Trusting to his popularity among the p classes, on his return to Stockholm from Gottenbu called a meeting of the magistrates and most resp citizens of the capital; to these he gave the fla name of a grand council of state, by whose adv professed to be governed in all his measures: he t them for the care with which they had executed portant trust committed to them in his capital and he informed them that in the preceding campaign, of retrieving Swedish glory, the national honour ha blasted by the disaffection of his nobles: these h rupted his army, had led it to the disgraceful an excess of a mutiny, in the presence of their sov and in the face of a foreign enemy. Expatiatin these subjects, he impressed his audience with the conviction, and they unanimously declared for the nuance of the war; with a warm assurance of thei and fortunes being devoted to his service. Having ed the support of his capital, he waited with con

for the meeting of the states; determined as to the measures which he would pursue, if they continued refractory. On the twenty-sixth of January, the diet having met the order of the nobles, immediately displayed their animosity to the king, and their disregard for his authority: they grossly insulted count Lowenhaupt, the president appointed by his majesty, and even treated the name of Gustavus himself with great virulence and contempt. The king having found that the three other orders, the peasants, clergy, and burghers, were unanimous in supporting the war, disregarded the opposition of the nobles, and determined to repress their insolence. On the seventeenth of February he repaired in person to the diet to demand satisfaction for the insult that was offered to the president, his representative in the assembly: a violent altercation here arose between the king and nobles, in the course of which his majesty made a charge of disaffection and treason; the nobles arose and left the assembly: the king addressing the three remaining states, most solemnly disclaimed every intention of aspiring at absolute authority, but declared there was a faction in the kingdom inimical to Sweden, and devoted to her enemy; that for the good of the country the faction must be crushed. The states unanimously expressed their concurrence with his majesty, and their determination to support any measures which he should think expedient for so desirable a purpose. On the twentieth of February, the king having communicated his plan of procedure to the three states, ordered twenty-five of the principal nobility to be arrested, and the officers who had been most active in exciting mutiny, to be seized and brought to Stockholm for trial. These vigorous measures received the general approbation of the three remaining orders. Gustavus proceeded in his efforts, and formed the bold measure of abolishing the senate, a council consisting chiefly of nobles, and that had of late greatly thwarted the king: his vigorous resolution entirely suppressed this assembly, without the least commotion or opposition, and in its place he instituted a new council, totally dependent on himself: the nobles were so much dismayed and intimidated by these acts, that they suffered Gustavus to extend his

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changes: his majesty to secure and confirm the remaining orders in their attachment, granted them respectively such new privileges, and paid them such honours, as he knew they would most highly value. To render these alterations permanent, Gustavus proposed an act of confederation, union, and surety, by which he and all true Swedes were to be mutually bound in the most firm and solemn manner, not only to common defence, but to the preservation of the present constitution and laws, against all impugners, whether foreign or domestic. Though the nobles so far recovered from the consternation as to oppose this measure, yet his majesty directed the president to subscribe it in their name; and thus Gustavus effected in a few weeks a revolution, which entirely destroyed the authority that the nobles had been so long endeavouring to reestablish, and the influence which the intrigues of Russia had been so many years employed in acquiring. The trials of the officers charged with mutiny, commenced soon after the arrest; and though the necessity of obedience and military subordination required condign punishment, the executions were not numerous.

He confirms his popularity.

He directs his whole energies against Russia.

By the reduction of the nobles, the suppression of the mutiny, and his popularity with the other states, Gustavus was now master of the whole efficient force of his kingdom, and thereby was enabled to make a vigorous preparation for prosecuting the war with Russia: besides the supplies afforded him by the estates, he received a very considerable sum from the Ottoman Porte. Before he opened the campaign against Russia, the strong arguments, and urgent instances of Mr. Elliot, on the part of the defensive alliance, prevailed upon Denmark to consent to an absolute neutrality, and thus freed the Swedish king from that source of apprehension. Gustavus was now enabled to direct his whole attention and force to the prosecution of the war in Finland, and opened the campaign in the beginning of June. On the twenty-eighth a very fierce battle was fought between the Swedes and Russians, in which the latter had almost prevailed, when the king springing from his horse, put himself at the head of his infantry, rallied them, and compelled the enemy to fly. Various skirmishes were afterwards fought, in which

Military and naval campaign between Sweden and Russia.

the Swedish monarch displayed the most intrepid and active valour, bold and fertile genius:[s] the successes were various; but during the first part of the campaign most frequently on the side of Sweden. Encouraged by his advantages, the hero penetrated into Russian Finland, having on the coast a fleet of light galleys to cooperate with the army as occasion might require. Between this fleet and another of the same sort from Russia a battle was fought, in which great numbers were destroyed on both sides: the Swedes were obliged to retire; and though they were not totally defeated, the superiority of the Russians was such that it compelled Gustavus to evacuate the enemy's country.[t] The season being now too far advanced to admit military operations in those cold latitudes, both armies withdrew into winter quarters, and the king returned to Stockholm. The duke of Suddermania, the king's brother, commanded the principal fleet of Sweden, but no decisive action took place between his armament and the fleet of Russia.

Commotions in the Netherlands.

WHILE the emperor was by his preparations and expense, together with the misconduct of the enemy, obtaining victories and conquests from which he could derive no permanent advantage, he was endangering his most productive possessions. The Netherlands, first of all the states of modern Europe, successfully cultivated agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, and acquired at an early period a considerable degree of liberty. They consisted of independent states, resembling one another in their pursuits, manners, character, and constitution of government. Their polity, was composed of three orders, the nobles, clergy, and people under the limited principality of one person denominated count: the contests between the prerogatives and privileges of the respective principalities, according to their result, gave different modifications to the freedom which they all possessed, and which they continued to retain under various families of princes that happened, through intermarriage, to succeed

State and constitution of these provinces.

s Gustavus depended entirely on genius and heroism; being deficient in military experience and skill, as he himself afterwards acknowledged in conversation with the marquis de Bouillé. See Memoirs, p. 396.

t Annual Register, 1789, chap. viii.

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to the sovereign authority. The best defined, and most perfect of their political systems, was the constitution of Brabant. The great charter of that country was no less venerated by the inhabitants, than the charter of Runnymede is revered by Englishmen: from a circumstance attending its execution, it was known by the name of Joyous Entry. The inhabitants of the Austrian Netherlands were extremely devoted to their ancient religion: this predilection probably arose, partly from their long intercourse with Spain, and perhaps, still more from the animosity between them and their neighbours and coutrymen the Dutch, that originated in wars in which they were the principal sufferers: but, whatever might be the cause, it is a certain fact, the Netherlanders were extremely addicted to the most absurd and extravagant tenets of the Roman catholic faith: they manifested a very warm affection to their princes, both the aboriginal sovereigns of the country, and their descendants of the house of Austria. Upon the accession of the German branch of that house to the dominion of these provinces, Charles VI. was received by the people with the greatest cordiality and good will, he having first sworn at his inauguration, as his successors have constantly done, to the preservation of their ancient constitutions and rights. During the distresses of their family, at the accession of Maria Theresa, they derived the most essential benefit from the zeal and fidelity, the loyalty, and the resources of money and of men, which were supplied by their subjects in the Low Countries. The free subsidies were granted with a liberality proportioned to the emergency for which they were required: they continued during her life to manifest undiminished affection, and cherished the same sentiments for her son Joseph. Beloved by them before, the emperor had confirmed their attachment by the flattering hopes which he raised in the Low Countries, that he would recover and open to them the navigation of the Scheldt. Blasted as their expectations were, imputing the disappointment to necessity, they had not relaxed in attachment to their sovereign; and though they did not rise in their estimation of his political and military abilities, they were grateful for the benignity of his intention. The spirit, however, of

restless innovation, which so much distinguished the active, but superficial character of Joseph, soon extended to the Netherlands, and interfered with their ancient privileges and ancient religion, the two objects of which they were most preculiarly tenacious. CHAP. XLII. 1789.

No position in political philosophy is more obvious, than that systems of polity, civil or ecclesiastical, must be adapted to the sentiments, habits, opinions, and even prejudices of the people:[u] such reforms, therefore, as overlook these, however abstractedly agreeable to reason and rectitude, are neither reasonable nor right in their application to those particular cases, because they do not conduce to the happiness of the subject. The clergy were alarmed and enraged; the people grieved and astonished by the suppression of religious houses, to which, however absurd in the enlightened views of an Englishman, the Netherlands annexed an importance that a wise ruler would have regarded. It was soon seen that reform was not his only object; and that he desired change for the sake of confiscation, that he might procure the means of gratifying an extravagant and infatuated ambition. Men of abilities and enlarged minds being totally free from bigotry and superstition, thought that some of the monasteries and convents might be very easily spared; but by no means relished suppression for the sake of plunder; the same rapacity which seized that species of property, would, they apprehended, extend to other kinds of possessions. The ecclesiastical order formed a very powerful, numerous, and opulent body in the Low Countries; and their property, of every sort, was estimated at the immense sum of twenty-five millions sterling. The states being composed of the representatives of the clergy, the nobility, and the commons: the church had likewise possessed, from time immemorial, at least a third part in the government of the country. It was apprehended, from the emperor's conduct, that he had projected to destroy the privileges of this order, as a preliminary step to the seizure of their immense wealth. All ranks were alarmed, and began to coalesce, in order to oppose an innova-

Joseph's violent desire of change under the name of reform.

Innovations in the ecclesiastical establishments.

Suppression of religious orders,

[u] See Aristotle's Politics.

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and confiscation of their property.

ting system, the real purpose of which they conceived not to be reform but robbery. Those who were themselves merely anxious for the preservation of their civil rights, found it expedient to encourage the discontents of the clergy, and even to profess sympathy with the superstition and bigotry of the lower orders: these various causes coinciding, formed a compact and powerful opposition against the dangers which threatened their ancient establishments. Fortunately for his subjects and neighbours, as the objects of Joseph were wicked, his policy was weak: he was totally deficient in that dexterity and address, which can varnish mischievous schemes, and smooth the way for their reception; he neither tried disguise, insinuation, nor deceit, the usual engines of ability attempting injustice, where the effect of force would be doubtful: his heart dictated usurpation and injury, but his head was not well fitted for insuring success: a harsh arbitrary and imperious display of authority appeared in all his measures: he was particularly desirous of suppressing ancient customs, and changing ancient institutions.

Suppression of ancient, venerated and beneficial customs.

There was a festival of great antiquity in the Low Countries, called the Kermesse, and highly venerated by the inhabitants: it was a season of mutual visiting, and of reconciling differences, not only between individuals, but villages; it was equally a season for contracting marriages, forming new friendships, and renewing and cementing the old. This innocent source of festive recreation, this laudable occasion of social virtue, was in the emperor's innovating zeal suppressed. The disposal of land and revenue, belonging to the abolished convents, produced great dissatisfaction and complaint: they were rendered part of the royal domains, and merely filled the coffers of the emperor. His next attempt was upon the abbacies, the most opulent and splendid of the religious establishments. Several of these conferred a right on the possessors, of being directly inherent members of the states. In Brabant this high distinction and privilege in favour of the abbots, was carried to a greater extent than elsewhere; for the whole of the clergy, being the first order of the state, were represented by abbots only. Joseph did not at first subvert

the abbacies, but as the incumbents died, placed them to be held *in commendam*, which was directly contrary to an express article of the Joyous Entry. In the beginning of 1787 he published two edicts, which entirely absorbed the consideration of every smaller change; by these all the tribunals,[x] all the forms and course of civil justice, which for so many centuries had been established and pursued in the Low Countries, which the people had so long considered as their glory, and regarded with enthusiastic admiration, were to be abolished in one day. The forms of process in the old courts were fair and open: they publicly exhibited the series of evidence, rules of interpretation, the principles applied and grounds of decision. New tribunals were appointed, in which the secresy of despotism marked the proceedings; witnesses were privately examined, the parties were often ignorant of the evidence on which they were tried, and the decision was left to a single judge, who was to determine according to his discretion without any existing law. The persons appointed to this office were foreigners,[y] totally unacquainted with the ancient laws of the Netherlands, or at least altogether regardless of their spirit and tenor. Such modes of judicial procedure, combined with the other parts of the emperor's conduct, were considered as the forerunners of proscription and tyranny: they excited great alarm among the people, not without a determination to resist acts so contrary to the compact by which Joseph held the sovereignty of the Netherlands. But the second edict advancing in lawless usurpation, confirmed their resolution not quietly to submit to the destruction of their rights.

Change of judicial forms and proceedings.

Arbitrary system introduced.

x The principal tribunals were in the villages; a court held by the lord of the manor, who in smaller cases delegated his authority to a set of reputable men within his district; but in greater judged himself, being assisted by two eminent counsellors to expound the laws. In the cities the jurisdiction was in the hands of their respective magistrates: there was a supreme tribunal composed of sixteen judges and a president, in which, causes either civil or criminal might originate; and in civil cases an appeal lay from the inferior courts. See Annual Register, 1789, p. 207.

y The baron de Martini, an Italian, was sent into the Low Countries, with the title of Imperial Commissary, to establish and regulate the new tribunals, and to prescribe to a nation, which had for many ages gloried in the freedom, as well as the equity of its civil institutions, in what manner justice should be dispensed in future.

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THE states of the Netherlands were justly deemed by the people the guardians of their laws, liberty, and property; and in them was rested the power of imposing taxes on the subjects, and granting subsidies to the prince. In the exercise of this power they had uniformly satisfied both parties, by liberal grant without burdensome impost. The assembly of the states met annually at Brussels, and having performed the most material part of their business, intrusted the rest to a select committee, whose proceedings they reviewed at the following meeting. This legislative branch of the constitution was no less valued than the judicative, but the emperor in his second edict proclaimed its subversion; he abolished the old institutions and forms, and substituted an engine of state under the name of a council of general government, which, while it drew all public affairs within the sphere of its own action, was to be ruled by the court minister who was placed at its head. Without nominally annihilating the assembly of the states, the new form of government really destroyed its powers: it ordained, that the states might nominate a deputy, who, if approved of by the minister and his council, might be a member of that council, and when required by the minister was to sign all the acts formerly exercised by the states, but now to be proposed by the council. Thus, the states were really to have no other power but to subscribe imperial mandates; and their authority was to be exercised by a nominal representative, under the control of the minister and his council: the jurisdiction of this new council was farther to extend to all cases of police and revenue: all persons even suspected, or pretended to be suspected, were the objects of inquisitorial procedure, by order of the council and minister, from whose decrees there lay no appeal. When the nature and extent of this despotic usurpation was understood and comprehended, the people very loudly expressed indignant resentment against so daring a violation of that convention, by which only the archduke of Austria, held the limited sovereignty of the Netherlands. In language less mindful of his rank than descriptive of his conduct, they plainly and unequivocally charged Joseph with having violated the inaugural compact and oath, and not obscurely intimated,

Subversion of the established legislature.

that a breach of a conditional contract by one of the parties absolved the other from its obligations. Those who were most favourable to the emperor, alleged, that the obnoxious edicts proceeded from mistaken views of the public good, and not from a design upon their liberties: according to such advocates he had suppressed the ancient tribunals, that the people might be able to obtain justice in a less expensive and more compendious way, and his alteration of the government was designed to give it more simplicity and energy: the small military force in the Low Countries was totally inadequate to the establishment of an absolute sovereignty; he had been deceived by partial and false representations, and misled by evil counsellors. The reply to this species of vindication was obvious; whether violation of their dearest rights proceeded from the despotic intentions, or the defective judgment of the sovereign, it was equally incumbent on subjects to defend their constitutional liberties: though the conduct of the emperor was, in all his dominions, such as to evince a narrow understanding, yet in the Netherlands, and every other part, it was so uniformly directed to one object, the invasion of property to increase his own revenue that misinformation and erroneous reasoning did not account for its general tenor; *no person could be a systematic robber by mistake.*

The emperor's chief counsellor was the count Belgiojoso his minister, a Milanese, a great favourite with his master; and who possessing all the subtlety, artifice, and crooked policy of an Italian statesman, was extremely disagreeable to the open, frank, and honest Flemings. The governor general, the duke of Saxe Teschen and his wife, the archdutchess, sister to the emperor, were extremely popular, and never suspected of promoting any unconstitutional designs; but the minister possessed the real power of government. Belgiojoso proceeded to a violent exercise of the powers so lawlessly usurped; indeed, if he had conceived a design of extending and consolidating a revolt, he could not have formed a more efficacious plan for the purpose: having excited the resentment of the civil orders, by the overthrow of the established judicature and legislature, he next attacked

erical order, not as before, by suppressing certain ties, the least essential to the church, but those ons which nourished its appropriate learning, preved its most important rights, and that literature and science from which it chiefly derived its influence. The principal university of Brabant was the Louvain, one of the most celebrated schools of Roman catholic theology; distinguished for the extraordinary reverence with which it regarded the supreme pontiff, by its profound respect for the priesthood, and consequently highly prized by zealous votaries of the R h church: all its colleges were abolished, and a gener seminary was established, in which, by an edict, all youth designed for the church were required to pursue their theological studies. For this new school a German rector and professors were appointed, to the exclusion of native teachers. Such a change, violating the ecclesia ical constitution, and tending to introduce new d s of theology, was warmly opposed by the bishops, the university, and the people. The Low Countries, so long famous for the purity of its catholic faith; the Louvain, the nurse of holy religion, was to be contaminated with the heresies in which Germany abounded. The minister enjoined father Godefroy, visitor of the capuchins at Brussels, to send the young students of his order to be educated in the general seminary: this clergyman refused to comply; Belgiojoso commanded him to depart from Brussels in twenty-four hours, and the emperor's dominions in three days. Such a violent act afforded a new subject of complaint to those who were zealous in religion, and strengthened the abhorrence of the new seminary; but it increased the apprehensions of the progress of arbitrary power, which were already so generally entertained. The emperor and his counsellors appeared to have adopted, respecting his richest and most productive dominions, one of the most dangerous principles that can actuate the conduct of a government, *that subjects are merely to be considered as a source of revenue*, and the expediency of political plans and acts to be estimated by their tendency to supply the coffers of the prince. The discontents and commotions in the Netherlands very greatly diminished its financial

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pling liberty and franchises.

Joseph considers his Flemish subjects merely as sources of revenue.

efficiency, and consequently defeated the purpose which the authors of the innovations meant chiefly to promote. The minister pretending to impute the defalcation to contraband traffic, proceeded in a summary and arbitrary way against persons whom he professed to suspect to be engaged in such a commerce. One respectable and eminent merchant, who held a contract with government, was, after his accounts had been closed and passed, charged with a fraud: he challenged his accusers to make good their assertions by a fair and open trial, agreeably to the laws of his country; but, instead of a legal inquiry, he was seized by armed soldiers, and hurried away to Vienna. So flagrant a tyranny, joined to the general system, impressed the people with a belief, that their only alternative was subjection to foreign despotism, or vigorous and immediate resistance.

Remonstrances of the Netherlanders.

In Brabant the constitution had been the most precise, and its violations the most manifest; and there the resistance was the most prompt. In Brussels the companies of arts and trades, nine in number, chose representatives, each known by the name of syndic: these delegates constituted a corporation, entitled the syndics of the nine nations: they possessed not only municipal power, but also very considerable political direction in the choice of members for the assembly of the states; and being composed of the chief citizens, they added extensive influence to their strength. This was the first public body which expressed its sentiments concerning the usurpations: they drew up a plain, bold memorial, that stated actual facts and obvious consequences; and enumerated the conditions on which the prince of the Low Countries held his sovereignty, as set forth in the Joyous Entry: the representation quoted Joseph's inaugural oath to observe the prescribed stipulations, and his actual conduct, which was a systematic violation of his engagements; and concluded, that "if the sovereign shall infringe upon the "articles of the Joyous Entry, his subjects shall be dis- "charged from all duty and service to him, until such time "as due reparation shall be made for such infringements." This animated remonstrance inspirited and guided the other cities, and also the other provinces; and the peo-

eneral were determined to assert their rights; but
ore they should commence any active exertions, they
d the meeting of the states, that they might know
w f they could trust to their counsel and cooperation.
T E assembly met, and the very first step demonstrat-
firm and resolute part which they intended to act.
ap cation having been made for subsidies, they to-
refused to grant supplies until grievances were re-
d; they sent immediate orders to the collectors of
revenues to pay no regard to the financial officers ap-
ted by the new council, since they exercised an au-
which was not admitted by the Flemish constitu-
n: they then drew up a declaration of rights, a state-
nt of grievances, and an exhibition of consequences,
h more detailed and comprehensive than that of the
dics, and which avowed their determination to perse-
re in maintaining the constitution of their ancestors;
is manifesto they addressed to the governor general.
the same time Mr. Vandernoot, a counsellor of Brus-
sels, and an eminent advocate in the cause of liberty,
published a treatise addressed to the states, in which, from
ancient documents, he traced out and elucidated the con-
stitution of Brabant. The states not only ordered this
treatise to be read in their presence, but decreed public
thanks to the author, for having so ably and justly vindi-
cated the rights of the people. The states of Flanders
and Hainault concurred in the determination to resist all
the unconstitutional changes. The governors general en-
deavoured to break the force of the opposition by small
concessions, and liberal promises: the Italian, to his
great surprise, found that the Flemings were not to be
intimidated; and, until he could be supplied with an ade-
quate force, he had recourse to the more appropriate in-
struments of his country, duplicity and deception: the
attempt, however, was now too late; the patriots perse-
vered in their efforts, and held out to the minister the
terrors of an ancient statute of Brabant, that declared it
lawful to apprehend and to punish any person who should
obstinately persist in obstructing the public good: they
abolished the new seminaries and other unconstitutional
innovations; urged the governors general speedily to re-

dress their grievances; and added, that the people were in such a ferment, that they could not answer for the consequences of longer delay. The minister had hitherto obstructed concessions on the side of the governors general, but now pretended no longer to oppose conciliatory measures: alarmed at the revolution in the temper and dispositions of a people from whom they had before experienced the most affectionate attachment, the governors resolved, as far as their power extended, to restore the tranquillity and happiness of the provinces. They issued a decree on the thirtieth of May, declaring that all arrangements contrary to the Joyous Entry should be entirely set aside, and that due reparation should be made for all infringements on that great charter which the people held so sacred: they hoped the emperor would ratify this declaration, and promised to exert their utmost influence with him to accomplish such a desirable purpose. This proclamation at first diffused general joy through the Netherlands; but these sentiments were interrupted by doubts concerning the emperor's ratification. Joseph instead of sanctioning the decree, despatched a mandate to the states of the Low Countries, strongly expressing his astonishment, indignation, and displeasure, at those intemperate and violent measures which the states had adopted, and that bold defiance which they had given to his authority: his edicts had not been intended to subvert the constitution, but to correct ancient abuses, and to make salutary reforms. As a proof of their obedience he required the states of each province to send deputies to Vienna, to lay their subjects of complaint at the foot of the throne. As a father he would pardon the errors and temerity of his subjects, but would severely punish them, if they continued refractory.

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DISAPPOINTED by so imperious an order, and so unfounded reprehension, they did not sink under the insolent claims of usurped authority, but took vigorous measures for their own security. To prevent, however, matters from coming to extremities, they thought it prudent to comply to a certain extent with his requisition: they appointed deputies, intrusted with very limited powers, merely to express the loyalty of the nation, and to

Deputies are sent to Vienna.

heir grievances, but to come to no conclusion re-
ung ublic affairs, without the special and immediate
r c the states. While the deputies were on their
ie they were informed that great bodies of im-
perial troops were marching towards the Low Countries. Though this intelligence greatly agitated, yet it did not depress the minds of the Flemings; resolved to maintain their liberties at every hazard of their lives and fortunes, they calculated their strength and resources, and found them much superior to those with which the Dutch had formerly resisted Spanish despotism: they hoped for the interference of the powers that were already inimical to Joseph's ambition; and that France in particular would willingly accept of the sovereignty of the Netherland provinces, so beneficial and commodious, upon the constitutional conditions which they would most gladly offer. The governors general having been called to Vienna, to be present when the deputies should appear before the emperor; count Murray, a nobleman of Scottish extraction commander of the Austrian troops in the Netherlands, was appointed governor during their absence. This officer, a man of prudence and temper, endeavoured to accommodate matters by moderating the fervour of the people, and the imperiousness of the sovereign. The Flemings, meanwhile, were turned with the most anxious expectation to the reception of their deputies at Vienna; and the first accounts were very far from being satisfactory. When presented to the emperor they were received with all that angry haughtiness which narrow understandings and illiberal sentiments in power produce to real or supposed inferiors, when they are the objects of displeasure. Undismayed by imperious insolence, the deputies stated their grievances; but Joseph informed them, that before he would vouchsafe to explain himself upon that subject, there were certain preliminary articles that count Murray would communicate to his states: the articles were, that things should be restored to the same footing in which they had stood at the meeting of the states; that the new tribunal council and seminaries abolished by the Flemings should be restored, the subsidies paid, and the volunteers dismissed: if these articles were

not executed, the Austrian army should proceed in its march to the Netherlands.

THE Flemings with great indignation refused to comply, and between volunteer corps, and parties of soldiers, quarrels and skirmishes arose, not without the effusion of blood; every thing, notwithstanding the conciliatory efforts of count Murray, seemed tending to hostilities, when despatches arriving from the deputies totally changed the public sentiments; by these it appeared, that harsh as the first reception of the deputies had been, at succeeding interviews the emperor had declared, that though he had thought it consistent with the dignity of his throne to testify his displeasure at the violent proceedings of his Flemish subjects, he was really favourable to their requests; and though he would not consent to the reestablishment of convents, nor to restore the nomination of abbots, he would grant all the other principal articles: he never proposed[z] to enforce his edicts by arms, and was willing to restore the Joyous Entry to its primitive vigour; he intended to visit the Netherlands, and to concert measures with the states for the welfare of his people. These agreeable declarations were accompanied with an unassuming and engaging politeness, which manifested, if not the ability of a statesman, the versatility of a courtier. The deputies were so captivated with the manners and address of the emperor, that they received every assurance and profession with unbounded faith: their constituents, though not so implicit in their confidence, yet were greatly pleased, and at last agreed to pay the subsidies into the royal treasury, as a mark of their reliance on the emperor's protestations. The count Murray in return published a declaration from the emperor, by which the Joyous Entry of Brabant was to be preserved entire, as well with respect to the ecclesiastical as the civil orders; the new tribunals were to be suppressed, and the ancient courts of judicature to resume their function. The sovereign promised, that whatever infraction had been made upon the Joyous Entry, he would employ measures for granting redress. This accomodation between the emperor and his subjects

Joseph pretends to grant their requests.

z See declaration of the emperor to the states of the Belgic Provinces; State Papers, July 3, 1787.

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diffused a general joy through the Low Countries. But the moderate system now adopted by Joseph, by discerning politicians, was imputed to particular circumstances, and not to any deviation from his general principles of action. In his innovating plan he had proceeded on the supposition, that the Netherlanders would make no material opposition, and that his wishes might be accomplished without distracting his attention, or withdrawing his force from the execution of his other schemes. From the spirit and vigorous conduct of the Flemings he saw that they could not be brought to submission without a considerable army, the employment of which in that service would weaken his efforts against the Turks; he therefore abandoned one unjustifiable project of aggression, that he might the more effectually promote another; and it was inferred, that really he had only postponed his design respecting the Low Countries to a more favourable opportunity. The great object[a] of Joseph appears to have been to establish one simple uniform military system of government through all the parts of his vast dominions. This purpose was obstructed in the Netherlands by the present concession: there were, besides, important articles left unsettled, which might be the ground of future dispute. His expressions, upon being more closely examined than during the first ebullitions of joy, were found to be general and vague. On reflection, the Flemings perceived that they held no pledge from the sovereign but his promises, while in disbanding the militia they had given the most solid and substantial security on their part.[b] The emperor after he had expressed his approbation of the lenient and conciliatory conduct of count Murray, appointed another commander in chief, who had no local connexions in the Netherlands; this was general Dalton, a soldier of fortune from Ireland, brave and enterprising, but whose principle of conduct was simply obedience to his master's orders, whatever they might be, or whatever rights they might violate. He had been employed against the rebellious mountaineers of Transylvania, and acquired considerable reputation by his military efforts; but had been noted for

Sends general Dalton to the Netherlands.

a Annual Register, 1787, chap. viii. b Annual Register, 1789, p. 38.

the cruelty with which he treated his prisoners. Count Trautmansdorff was appointed to the civil government, to the great satisfaction of the Low Countries, as he was a man of very amiable dispositions, and extremely popular; but it soon was found, that in power he was totally subordinate to Dalton. The governors general were by the emperor's new plan to be mere pageants of state and splendor, without any share of the government.

Despotic conduct of that officer.

THE first manifestation of the emperor's perseverance in the plan which he pretended to relinquish, was an attack upon the university of Louvain. While the Flemings were cherishing the hopes of preserving their revered constitution, and indulging the convivial festivity of the Christmas season, exhilarated by the flattering prospect, a peremptory order arrived in the emperor's name to the members of Louvain university, commanding them, without deliberation, delay, or remonstrance, immediately to enregister in their archives, and submit to, the system of reform prescribed by the sovereign. These mandates the university peremptorily refused to obey; they pleaded their constitutional rights, and appealed to the laws and justice of their country for protection. The minister, in his reply to this appeal, propounded a very simple and comprehensive principle, *that subjects must not plead rights, laws, justice, or their constitution, against the will of the sovereign.* Declarations were issued, commanding them to conform to the mandates of the emperor, and threatening the severest vengeance against all persons who should dare to assert a right contrary to the will of his imperial majesty. These dictatorial menaces were totally disregarded by the university, which was determined to assert its freedom. Count Trautmansdorff was now become entirely subservient to Dalton, and in his conduct showed, that the amiable dispositions and pleasing manners which had rendered him so popular, were not fortified by vigour, or secured by virtuous principles. This minister, by the direction of Dalton, sent a letter to the grand council of Brabant, requiring their efforts to reduce to obedience the refractory university, and specifying the time before which the mandate was to be executed: the council, with a dignified indignation replied, that the letter was founded in

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ignorance of their laws, tended to despotism and must be revoked. The minister replied, that it was his majesty's absolute determination, that *on whatever subject he signified his will, obedience must follow;* and he gave them twenty-four hours for publishing the decree. His commination being still disregarded, the following day he sent a notice, that if the decrees were not published within two hours, he should have recourse to the dire expedient of cannon and bayonets, which his majesty had most expressly prescribed. The council still paid not the smallest attention to those insolent threats; Dalton drew up a regiment of infantry near the council house, and ordered an ensign with a party of troops to patrole the streets. This officer, young, inexperienced, and desirous of showing power, on some trifling disturbance, ordered his men to fire a platoon among the multitude, killed six of the people, and wounded many more: the juvenile instrument of military despotism and murder, dreading the just vengeance of the people, hastily fled with his party to the main body of soldiers. The emperor informed of this achievement, highly applauded the ensign's conduct, and desired Dalton to inform him he *might expect promotion* on the first vacancy: he also expressed his warmest gratitude to Dalton for *supporting the dignity of the military character, and impressing the people with a due dread of the soldiers.* This massacre, *unimportant* (THE EMPEROR SAID) *as it was in itself*, might produce a salutary effect; but to insure obedience it was necessary for Dalton *to persevere in the same meritorious conduct.*[c] The army being once employed against the people, constant insolence and frequent bloodshed were the result. The people expressed their indignation in riots and tumults: one of these being quelled without firing a shot, the emperor, in a letter to his ministers, testified his disapprobation of such forbearance, and desired it might not be repeated. Trautmansdorff declared, that if the troops serving in the Netherlands were not sufficient, forty thousand men would immediately enter the Low Countries: this assertion his hearers well knew to be a boasting bravado, as the emperor's troops

[c] Annual Register, 1789.

were elsewhere fully employed. It is frequently difficult to discover the precise motive for conduct which is dictated by unprincipled wickedness, and guided by extreme folly. As Joseph's armies were engaged in the Turkish war, policy obviously dictated forbearance of injustice and tyranny in the west, that he might effectually promote aggression and spoliation in the east. His force in the Low Countries was very inadequate to his despotic purposes, or to the cruel intentions of his deputy. At the very time that the emperor was enjoining perseverance in military despotism to his willing and prompt underling, he, through the governors general, issued a declaration, setting forth his tender affection to his subjects, his desire of satisfying their wishes, the complete return of his favour, and his determination to give the Low Countries most convincing proofs of his benevolence and confidence. Flagrant as the duplicity of these professions were, their uselessness was no less obvious: force, not deception was his instrument of government; the soldiers could not the more easily massacre one man by proclaiming to him the *tender feelings* of their employers: it was a mere waste of falsehood, which could answer none of the assertor's purposes; more resembling the capricious versatility of a froward child, than the steady policy of a firm man, resolute in wicked designs.

THE interpreter of the emperor's tenderness was Dalton: among the sources of Dalton's fame acquired in Transylvania was a *gallows*[d] of an extraordinary height for hanging insurgents, and he declared his determination to erect an edifice of a like construction in the great square at Brussels. He now went to establish at Louvain the new professors of divinity; and to reform the errors of theological schools, the argument employed was the bayonet: the rector and professors were ejected by a file of musketeers, and the new teachers were established by the same authority. To celebrate the admission of the imperial instructors in theology, the soldiers murdered a great number of the inhabitants,[e] who could not refrain from assembling to pay the last tribute of grief at the overthrow

Effects of his tyranny.

[d] Annual Register, 1789, chap. ii. [e] Annual Register, 1789, chap. ii.

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of an institution, which had for so many ages been the pride and support of their city. But although soldiers could inaugurate persons appointed to *teach* the christian system according to the imperial canons of orthodoxy, they could not compel students to *learn*: the pupils had universally abandoned the colleges, and the masters were left to deliver their lessons, either in empty halls, or without any hearers, but their military coadjutors. At Malines and Antwerp the massacre was much more extensive than even at Louvain; and personal security was deemed so precarious in the Netherlands, that some of the nobility, and a great number of other inhabitants of distinction and property sought refuge in exile. The cruel executions committed upon a defenceless people by their rulers, in a season of peace and most profound tranquillity, excited the abhorrence of the neighbouring nations, and procured asylums for the unfortunate sufferers. Confiscation, despotism, and military execution being once established, property, liberty and life being insecure, those that still remained in the country withdrew their capitals from manufactures and commerce, and vested them in foreign funds, as a provision for their own flights, and repositories which Dalton's bayonets could not reach. In a country so recently eminent for industry and the arts, trade was entirely stagnant, and every occupation ceased, except those which minister to the necessity of life: revenue proportionably delined: fiscal productiveness, the great object of the emperor's tyranny, experienced a most important diminution: the states of Brabant announced a determination, under the present outrageous tyranny, to withhold the supplies. Such was the state of affairs at the close of 1788.

Farther cruelty and robbery by Joseph.

THE emperor published an edict, annulling all his former concessions, even recalling his inaugural oath to maintain the Joyous Entry; and all the obnoxious establishments of 1787 were to be speedily restored. The grand council of Brabant having refused to sanction so despotic an edict, that constitutional tribunal was suppressed; the management of the revenue, which had formed one of its delegated departments, was vested in a commission nominated by the emperor: no abbots were thenceforth to be

appointed in Brabant, and thus the clerical order was about to be suppressed; the commons were to be new modelled according the emperor's pleasure: the right of granting subsidies was to be no longer vested in the states, but in a council appointed by the emperor; the Joyous Entry was to be abolished; the whole government and all its parts were to be modelled according to the imperial will. A considerable part of the year 1789 was employed in executing these nefarious projects of infatuated ambition. The enmity to the clergy, and rapacity for money, two predominant features in the emperor's character, combined in dictating his most extensive and systematic schemes of robbery. By one decree he sequestered all the abbeys of Brabant, and appointed civil officers to manage their revenues for his use.[f]

SUCH a seizure of property, in a country which had so long enjoyed the blessings of a free constitution, and of ecclesiastical possessions among a people so devoutly attached to the priesthood, excited very general resentment, and open remonstrances from men, who already indignantly brooded over their fallen constitution, and meditated the reassertion of their rights: they resolved no longer to yield even the appearance of submission, either to subordinate tyranny, or the imperial despot himself. Stimulated to resistance by the strongest motives which can inspirit generous breasts; considering death as preferable to slavery; and recalling to their minds those gallant exertions by which a kindred people had emancipated themselves from an Austrian despot in the sixteenth century, they trusted that with much greater resources, against a foe less powerful, they would be no less successful in resisting an Austrian despot of the eighteenth;[g]

The Flemings resolve on forcible resistance.

f The author of Dodsley's Annual Register 1799, having attentively considered the detail of the spoliations, says, that he suppressed no less than a hundred and sixty monastic establishments, and that the only precaution he appears to have used was, that in this great suppression the men were more favoured than the women: of the male convents, only forty were sequestered; of the nunneries, one hundred and twenty.

g There was a considerable resemblance between the conduct of Joseph II. and his ancestor Philip II. of Spain; though the former was the professed champion of toleration, the latter of intolerance, the principle of both was much more nearly allied than would appear from a superficial view of their respective objects. Each sought to model the opinions of mankind according to his will; each endeavoured to effect his purpose by violence; each was cruel in

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besides their own resources, so valuable and efficacious, in the riches, population, and spirit of the people, and nature of the country, they might reasonably expect support from the arms of Prussia, and even of her maritime confederates. The emperor was engaged in the Turkish war, and his force greatly impaired by the disastrous events which it had produced: though emigration was very prevalent, yet the refugees chiefly sought shelter in the most adjacent states, and had greatly promoted the cause of their countrymen by describing the dreadful oppressions from which they had fled. With the emigrants the Flemish patriots maintained a very close correspondence, and concerted with them the plan and commencement of open resistance. Dalton, meanwhile, despatched part of his troops to seize every person suspected of disaffection, and carried the system of proscription and murder to a more enormous extent than at any former period of his tyranny, while Trautmansdorff acted as the civil instrument of oppression. A conspiracy was formed to blow up the houses of these tyrants with gunpowder; during the confusion to seize the gates of Brussels and the arsenal, and admit bodies of emigrants, who were prepared, and to be ready at hand for that purpose: the execution of this plot was fixed for August 1789; but being discovered, a great number of suspected persons were apprehended. While the ministers were inflicting summary punishments, the vigorous proceedings of the patriots called their attention to more formidable objects. About the middle of September 1789, the duke of Ursel, and the prince of Aremburg, count of la Marck, his son, with the other nobles who had retired to Breda, were joined by the archbishop of Malines or Mechlin, primate of the catholic provinces of the Netherlands, and by most if not all the states of Brabant, both civil and ecclesiastical, were constituted and declared

persecuting all those who opposed his system; each was imperious and despotical: both were ambitious without ability, restless without enterprise, aggressive and usurping in intention, mighty in project, but futile in execution, and unsuccessful in event. Philip, the creature of imitation, was the implicit votary of priestcraft: Joseph, the creature of imitation, was the implicit votary of infidelity: neither of them were guided by sound reasoning and original reflection: both, in supporting their favourite tenets, and gratifying malignant passions, did much mischief; but attempted much more than their incapacity suffered them to perpetrate.

1789. Declaration of rights.

to be the regular and legal assembly of the states of that province :[h] they framed and unanimously passed a remonstrance to the emperor, declaring their rights and their resolutions to maintain them against every violator: they were prepared to sacrifice their lives and fortunes for a sovereign who should govern them constitutionally, but they would not surrender those privileges which they held in trust for their fellow citizens, and for posterity: they adjured him to spare them the cruel necessity of appealing to God and their swords.

The declaration of the states, so contrary to his despotic sentiments and views, highly enraged the emperor, and he gave orders for increased severity and violence of military execution. The Belgians saw no hopes of redress, but by their swords, and in October 1789 they hoisted the standard of revolt: a body of insurgents took the two small forts of Lillo and Liefenshock on the Scheldt: in fort Lillo, besides the military stores, they found a considerable sum of money. Dalton sent general Schroeder against the invaders, at the head of four thousand troops, well disciplined. On the advance of this force the insurgents abandoned the two forts, and retreated towards Furnhout, a small town about eight miles from the forts: the imperialists pursued them to the gates, and forcing these open entered the town: the Brabanters retreating from the main street, drew the Austrians after them until they were inclosed in the market place; there the patriots firing from the adjoining houses, windows, and lanes, did great execution; the regulars being thus ensnared, and unable to extricate themselves, were broken and defeated, and compelled to retreat with the loss of seven hundred men. Hope, encouraged by success, roused all the patriotic and martial ardour of the Belgians: assuming the name of the patriotic army, they penetrated into the heart of the country: in the other provinces, as well as Brabant, the votaries of freedom flocked to the standard erected for its preservation, and burned with impatience to join their brethren in the field, that they might contribute their efforts to deliver their country from foreign

h See Annual Register for 1791, p. 32.

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tyrants. In the beginning of November a battle was fought at Tirlemont: a body of patriots having been pursued by Bender an Austrian general, had taken refuge in this place, and were warmly supported by its patriotic inhabitants. Bender having entered the town, was very vigorously received by the Flemings, and after an obstinate contest compelled to retreat. The Netherlanders now ventured to meet their adversaries in the open field, and having gained a complete victory, took possession of Ostend, Bruges, and Louvain. Animated by these successes, they had the boldness to attack the strong city of Ghent: having entered the town, they assailed and defeated the enemy in the streets; and compelled one part of them to fly for refuge to the barracks, while another sought shelter in the citadel. The third day of the siege the barracks surrendered; the defendants of the citadel finding they could no longer retain the place, committed the most infamous enormities in the streets, but soon evacuated the garrison: the defence of Ghent was by no means adequate in either vigour or skill to the force by which it was guarded. Joseph, desirous of winning his soldiers, had given directions for allowing them great laxity; the troops who were in the Netherlands, besides being recently freebooters, and accustomed to trample on the defenceless inhabitants, conceived a most thorough contempt for the Flemings; but when they came to battle, and were compelled to face the enemy on equal terms, they showed themselves to have totally deviated from the character of Austrian soldiers, and to be as dastardly as they were profligate. The reduction of Ghent was of the greatest consequence to the Flemish patriots; and the more especially as it enabled the states of Flanders to assemble in that capital of the province, for the purpose of legalising their public proceedings, giving a form to their intended new constitution, and concluding a league and federal union with the other provinces. The emperor informed of the great successes of the Flemish patriots, descended from his despotic haughtiness, and endeavoured by amicable promises to conciliate his late subjects; he exhorted the malcontents to lay down their arms, and to trust for the redress of real grievances to his clemency and paternal affection:

The patriots defeat the Austrian troops.

They form themselves into a federal republic.

dreadful consequences (he said) would ensue if they compelled him to relinquish the conquests which he was now prosecuting, and pour into the Netherlands armies that were now gathering laurels from a foreign enemy. Endeavouring partly to justify, and partly to explain his most obnoxious acts, he offered to revoke the offensive edicts, to comply with all their former demands, and to grant a general, full, and perpetual amnesty to all who should return to their duty within a specified but distant time, the leaders of the revolt alone excepted: but the Flemings had been too often deceived by Joseph to repose any confidence in his professions; and they now paid the less attention to his overtures, that from their successes they began to deem themselves no longer dependent on his power. On the twentieth of November the states of Flanders seized on the sovereign authority in their province, and, in imitation of their Dutch neighbours, assumed the title of high and mighty states: they passed resolutions, declaring the emperor to have forfeited all title to the sovereignty of the Netherlands; for raising, organising, and disciplining an army, and uniting themselves with the states of Brabant. The ardour and success of their countrymen inspired the inhabitants of Brussels with the desire and hope of rescuing their capital from the despotic ministers of Joseph. Intimidated by the victories of the Flemings, Dalton confined himself within the walls, and ordered the gates to be strictly guarded: his force consisted of about six thousand men, whereas the patriotic band did not exceed one thousand: the soldiers were, however, dispersed through different parts of the city; their adversaries were at a fixed rendezvous to form a compact body, which assailing the scattered enemy, by throwing them into partial confusion might cause general disorder, and animate the other citizens to join in the conflict. This gallant design was executed: the Flemish band defeated an Austrian detachment in one of the streets; the battle became general, and the insurgents got possession of the barracks, with two thousand muskets, and plenty of ammunition. Dalton retreated to the great square, where, attempting to defend himself, he was obliged to capitulate, and to give up Brussels, on being allow-

ed to escape with his garrison : he accordingly retired to Luxemburg : Trautmansdorff, with the other chief members of the government, withdrew to Liege. The governors general, from their popularity were not afraid of olence, yet, as the emperor's sovereignty was no longknowledged, they betook themselves into Germany. Flemings, in their victories, far from imitating the l cruelty of the imperial despot's soldiers, killed no ut in battle. Having thus made themselves masters chief towns, after celebrating the most solemn inon of religion, they restored the ancient courts of e, rescinded all the emperor's innovating edicts, sethe exercise of the sovereign power, and completely blished tranquillity. The states of Brabant being bled at Brussels, on the last day of the year 1789, themselves by oath, in the presence of the citizens, erve the rights, privileges, and constitution of their y, and then proceeded to administer the same oath members of the sovereign council of Brabant amidst neral acclamations of the people. The other provinexcept Limburgh, having concluded similar engagements concerning their respective internal constitutions, all the Austrian Netherlands, Limburgh excepted, formed themselves into a federal republic, to be distinguished by the title of the United Belgic States. Such was the result of the restless changes, rapacity, and usurpations of the emperor Joseph.

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Retrospective view of France.—Old government.—Character and spirit of France under Lewis XIV.—Sources of submission to arbitrary power—commencing and progressive change under Lewis XV.—Beginning of infidelity.—Voltaire and his disciples.—Beginning of anti-monarchism.—Rousseau supposes man a perfectible being.—Progress of his doctrines through the efforts of literature.—Cooperating political causes.—General impolicy and burdensome expense of the French wars against Great Britain.—Enormous expenditure and distressful consequences of the war to support our revolted colonies.—Pecuniary embarrassments.—Various schemes of alleviation.—Convention of the notables—Calonne unfolds the dreadful state of the finances.—Calonne proposes an equalisation of public burdens—incenses the privileged orders.—Outcry against the minister—disgraced—retires into banishment.—Brienne minister.—Trifling and inefficient reforms.—Contests with parliaments.—Attempts of the crown to overawe the refractory—unsuccessful.—Arbitrary suspension of parliaments.—National ferment.—Distressed situation of the king—abandoned by many of his courtiers—resolves to recal Mr. Neckar—who consults the convocation of the states general.—Question concerning the consolidation of the orders.—Meeting of the states.—Commons propose to meet in one chamber—opposed by the crown.—Commons constitute themselves a national assembly, without regard to the other orders.—Violence of demagogues.—Soldiers infected with the popular enthusiasm—insubordination and licentiousness.—King orders troops to approach to Paris.—Popular leaders prepare to defend the capital.—An army of volunteers immediately raised—attack the royal magazines to procure arms—assail the Bastile.—Subversion of the old government.—Declaration of rights—fundamental principle the RIGHTS OF MAN.*—First acts of the revolutionists—power—great*

*and general object to subvert establishment—to that object all the whole energies of the French genius and character exerted.—Licentiousness of the press.—Twenty thousand literary men employ themselves in stimulating the mob to outrage.—An engine of government new in the history of political establishments—*CLUBS*—influence of —extended by association—doctrines—influence and operation.—Lawless violence in the country.—Peasants turn upon the proprietors.—Some of the nobility propose to sacrifice a large portion of their privileges and property —their example imitated and emulated.—Sacrifices of the nobles and clergy.—Admiration of the commons.—Proposition for the seizure of church property—remonstrances of the clergy—disregarded.—Parliaments annihilated.—Immunities sacrificed.—The law and policy of the kingdom overturned.—Scheme for voluntary contributions.—Gold and silver sent to the mint.—Preparations for the new constitution—the authority to be possessed by the king.—Suspensive* VETO.—*Question, if the assembly was to be composed of one or two chambers —carried, that there should be only one.—English constitution proposed as a model—rejected.—French commons inimical to mixed government—settlement of the succession.—Ferocity of the people—inflamed by scarcity. —Additional troops arrive at Versailles—entertainment given by the officers in the palace to the new comers.— The royal family visit the banqueting room.—Music describes the sufferings of a captive prince.—The queen having in her arms the infant dauphin presents him to the officers—the ladies of the court accompany her.— Effects of beauty, music, and wine, combined.—Unguarded enthusiasm of the loyal soldiers—trample on the national cockade.—Report of this entertainment at Paris. —Rage and indignation of the revolutionists.—Activity and influence of the fishwomen and courtezans.—The mob determines to bring the king to Paris—expedition of the women for that purpose—hang priests and aristocrats—march to Versailles—overawe the legislature—break into the assembly and take possession of the speaker's chair. —Mob assault the palace—attempt to murder the queen —prevented by the heroism of her defenders.—King and*

queen agree to depart for Paris.—Mournful procession of a degraded monarch.—Farther proceedings at Paris.—The existing government endeavouring to quell the mob —severe prosecutions for that purpose.—Effects of the French revolution in Britain.—Detesting the old French government and not acquainted with the new, Britons approve of the revolution as friendly to liberty.—Sentiments of various classes—respectively differing, concur in favouring the French revolution.

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THE event which rendered the year 1789 most important to Britons and all the civilized world, was the French revolution, the causes and means of which extraordinary change it requires a retrospective view of the scene of operation to investigate and comprehend. The government of France was, in the earlier ages, one of those feudal aristocracies, which the northern conquerors established over Europe. The degree of civil and political liberty that extended to the commons was very inconsiderable in France, as in most other countries, except England and the Netherlands. The power of the king in the middle ages was extremely limited; the country consisted of a collection of principalities, in each of which the lord superior enjoyed an arbitrary sway, and held the people in a condition of abject vassalage. This state of relative power in the vicissitudes of human affairs underwent material changes. The kings had one general object, diminution of baronial authority; prudence required the barons to unite for their common advantage, yet they had respectively separate interests which much more constantly occupied their attention. By sowing discord between these turbulent chieftains, the sovereigns rendered their aggregate force less formidable. Conquests, escheats, or treaties, united several fiefs to the crown: Lewis XI. considerably reduced the power of the nobility, the feudal aristocracy was entirely destroyed by cardinal Richelieu, and the separate sovereignties were consolidated into one entire mass.[i] As the people had been without liberty under feudal lords, they continued to

Old government of France.

i See introduction to this history.

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vitude under the monarch: before the total re- f the aristocracy, they had indeed possessed an of states, but so modelled, that the commons real share of the power: the nobles and clergy ely connected by immunities and other privileges, l easily overpower the third estate. From the ation of Richelieu, France had been without appearance of a legislative voice; every privi- ıe subject was under the control of a government corrupt and tyrannical. The men of wealth chased either by courtly honours, presents avish waste of the public revenue, which to be exclusively wrung from the grasp or the nd the laborious. Liberty and e either interfered with the will o making a part subservient to the r permanent regulations, or ten gregate of happiness which we produce; the old government of whole according to the pleasure and caprice of a small part; the comfort and welfare of twenty-four millions was of little account when compared with the freak or fancy of the prince, the interest or inclination of his favourites. The suggestion of a priest or a prostitute would desolate a whole province,[k] and drive from that country its most industrious inhabitants. The nobility and clergy, and also the magistrates, were exempted from their share of the public burdens; the taxes instead of being paid by the rich and the great, fell upon the poor. These tyrannical exactions were rendered more cruelly oppressive by the established mode of extortion; the revenue was farmed, and farther leased by the principal undertakers to others, and by these to subordinate collectors with advance of rent; in the various steps of intermediation between the payer of the impost and the government, much greater sums were squeezed from the commons than ever found their way to the public treasury. The farmers of the revenue principally con-

k See in Render's Tour through Germany, an account of the devastation of the palatinate.

stituted the moneyed class, or at least, were the greatest capitalists ;[l] in them government had its chief resource for loans to carry on the projects of extravagant ambition, and infatuated aggression. Many of the nobility from their prodigality were poor notwithstanding their immunities and donatives, and from these men had the means of supply ; the court, therefore, very readily connived at most flagrant extortions in the administration of the revenue, as the commons only were to suffer by the spoliation.

Character and spirit of France under Lewis XIV. and XV.

THE old government of France, was, no doubt, liable to these and other objections, both in its principles and practice ; and in the reigns of Lewis XIV. and XV. it was a very arbitrary and oppressive system. Its vices appeared the more glaring to political observers, by being contrasted with the constitution of the neighbour and rival of France. Perhaps, indeed, this circumstance produced to that system, still less estimation than it really deserved. To Britons it would have been an intolerable scheme of policy, and must have crushed the energy of the British character, which in a great measure results from civil and political liberty ; but a greater or less degree of restraint is necessary according to the knowledge and dispositions of a nation as well as an individual. The French minds, sentiments, and habits, appeared to require a stronger curb than the British ; but on the other hand the authorities which were to control the violence, regulate the vivacity, and guide the versatile instability of the Gallic character, were by no means well placed. The power was not exerted for rendering the greatest benefit to the subjects which even their tempers would admit ; it was much more arbitrary than was expedient for a civilized people to tolerate. The great mass of the commons were in a state of slavery to the priests, the nobles, and the officers of the crown ;[m] such a condition only profound ignorance, fear, or infatuation could suffer. It was natural for intelligent and ingenious men to see the imperfections of the arbitrary government, and to wish for a reform of various abuses. The splendid actions of Lewis XIV. notwithstanding their real impoli-

l Annual Register, 1787 and 1789. m New Annual Register, 1789.

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cy, dazzled his subjects; his ostentatious displays to other nations of his superiority, so flattering to the predominant vanity of the French character, rendered them eager partisans of their great monarch. Instrumental to the glory of the sovereign, they thought they were promoting their own! Vanity assumed the disguise of honour; and in gratifying the prince, and courting his approbation, they overlooked their own condition; they forgot they were bearing slavery, encountering war, poverty, and starvation, merely as puppets in the hands of a vainglorious tyrant.[n] Under Lewis XIV. their subserviency was very abject, but it arose from causes that could not be permanent, and, indeed, from a certain operation of passions and energies, which, in another direction, might readily attempt, and powerfully affect the dissolution of their fetters. Submission to arbitrary power arises from various causes, and operates differently according to the diversities of national characters; often it may proceed from barbarous ignorance and intellectual debasement, which mindful of only animal wants thinks not of any higher enjoyments than the supply of these;[o] a phlegmatic temper, that does not feel injustice and oppression; or from relaxation, indolence and timidity, which, notwithstanding a knowledge of right, and a feeling of wrong, prevents strenuous efforts for vindication and redress; servitude in these cases is a *passive principle*. The French were very far from being void of knowledge, sensibility, courage, or active exertion: on the contrary, they were intelligent, ardent, bold, and enterprising, but their passions engaged their ingenuity and their force in supporting and aggrandizing their absolute monarch. Submission to arbitrary power was, in them love for the sovereign, a STRONGLY ACTIVE PRINCIPLE; theirs was implicit obedience yielded by strength, not despotism forced upon weakness. The French animation was extremely eager in the pursuit of pleasure as its levity was very fond of pageantry and show. The magnificent profusion of Lewis and his court was well adapted for increasing the popularity acquired by political and military achievements;

Sources of submission to arbitrary power.

n Smollett's Continuation of Hume, vol. i.

o As in the case of the negroes, see Park's Travels, *passim*.

the high admiration, or rather the adoration with which his subjects regarded this monarch, soon excited in their warm and enthusiastic minds an ardent affection for the whole royal family, and indeed all the princes of the blood; they associated the ideas of estimation for royalty with military prowess. These effects were, as long as they lasted, very favourable to the continuance and extension of absolute sway, but the causes were perfectly compatible with totally different sentiments. Under Lewis XV. the French long continued ardent in loyalty, and manifested their affection and reverence for the kingly name in implicit obedience to the mandates of his most christian majesty; but while energy was exerting itself in the boldest enterprise for promoting the great monarch's glory, props of his power were beginning to be impaired. From the middle of his reign the Roman catholic faith commenced its decline, and towards the close, the political power of the sovereign received a considerable shake.

Commencing and progressive change under Lewis XV.

Beginnings of infidelity.

THE abandoned debauchery of the court under the duke of Orleans's regency had prepared the higher ranks for the infusion of infidelity which was afterwards so extensively received. The first movers of this scheme of irreligion were certain votaries of literature, who employed men of high rank as their instruments. Learning became daily more prevalent in Europe, and having been fostered in France by the ostentatious vanity of Lewis XIV. though limited during his reign to subjects of taste, sentiment, and natural philosophy, afterwards extended to theology, ethics, and politics. Voltaire was admirably fitted for impressing the susceptibility, gratifying the taste, amusing the fancy, inflaming the passions, and so misleading the judgment of lively, refined, ingenious, ardent, and volatile readers and hearers: he, therefore, was thoroughly skilled in the most effectual means of attacking the faith of Frenchmen. Vanity materially assisted the infidel's operations: the nobility having imbibed under Lewis XIV. a relish for literature and still more for literary patronage, were desirous of cultivating, or appearing to cultivate, intimacy with a man of so high rank in letters, repeated his doctrines and witticisms, and abandoned their religion to pass for philosophers. Besides, the debauchery of Lewis

Voltaire.

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XIV., carried by his pupil the duke of Orleans to a much more profligate excess, and not much corrected under the mature age of Lewis XV., established in the morals of courtiers a powerful auxiliary for spreading infidelity. The ridiculous absurdity of many of the popish doctrines was easily discernible to French sagacity when turned to such animadversions: and their various mummeries afforded scope to the French wit and satire, when permitted to take such a range. Gallic ingenuity could easily find arguments to expose the frivolity and folly of many of their priestly doctrines, rites, and observances; but as ardent as versatile, leaving their superstitions, they took the opposite and much more dangerous extreme. Some of the king's ministers, pleased with the theories of the Voltaire school, and converted by his jokes, became deists, made the king inimical to various parts of the ecclesiastical establishment, and inspired him with a desire of reforming the church. This reform both in France and other countries arose partly from a diminished regard for the established church, but principally from the love of plunder: its consequences were a degradation of the clerical character to a much lower state than was requisite for the purposes of spiritual and moral instruction. The suppression of the religious orders, and the general system of policy towards the church, from the peace of Paris to the end of the duke de Choiseul's administration, tended very powerfully to second the efforts of deistical writers against the church. Indeed the acts of Lewis XV. at the instigation of his favourites, were powerfully efficient causes, though not the proximate, of the downfal of religion in the reign of his successor. It is by no means a difficult undertaking for a man of genius to establish a new sect in religion or politics; if he mean to mislead the judgment, he has only by animated description to impress the imagination, or by impassioned eloquence to impel the affections.[p] Voltaire was very successful in the use of these instruments: other literary adventurers readily pursued a tract leading so directly to esteem and patronage.

p Whitfield, Wesley, and other adventurers of a more recent date clearly and strongly illustrate the facility with which ingenuity fashioning itself to the fancies and passions of men, may impress a new hypothesis of religion.

Under such influence, projects and institutions were formed for circulating their doctrines. By such influence, projects, and institutions,[q] infidelity made very rapid advances: except in the lower classes of people, in the latter period of the reign of Lewis XV. the majority of laity in France were deists. Opinions and sentiments so inimical not only to absolute monarchy, but to every form of regular government, are indebted for their disseminations to the imbecility of Lewis XV., and the narrow views of his ministers. The same spirit of free inquiry not being properly understood or wisely modified by the court of France, from exposing the absurdities of many popish observances proceeded to attack christianity itself, and soon extended to politics. In their efforts against superstition, the philosophists, in the violent ardour of the French character, rushing to the opposite extreme, pulled up the wheat as well as the tares; the same operators, employed on the same materials, using a similar process in politics, produced similar effects; and in both, seeking to avoid one evil, without discriminating it from the good in which it was mixed, they incurred a greater. Speculating upon the rights and happiness of man, they easily saw that the government of France was very far from being well adapted to the security of rights or the diffusion of happiness. The ingenuity of Frenchmen has, in most subjects of study, exhibited itself much more frequently in framing hypotheses than in collecting facts, investigating principles, and deducing consequences from actually established premises. This mode of procedure, well adapted to the poet's invention, was employed in cases which required the reasoning of the philosopher, and the wisdom of the sage. A position was assumed by Helvetius and many others, but above all by Rousseau, that man was a perfectible being, and that every change of system was to be adapted to the perfection which he might attain. While Voltaire and his sect were labouring to undermine existing establishments, Helvetius, Rousseau, and their sects, besides rendering a helping hand to the scheme of demolition, were very active in proposing new models

Commencement of anti-monarchical doctrines.

Rousseau supposes man a perfectible being.

q See Barruel on jacobinism, vol. i. passim.

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totally impracticable, because to consist of perfect men, materials were no where found to exist. The French statesmen were equally blind to the probable consequences of the political as of the theological theories so prevalent towards the close of Lewis XV.'s reign. Then was the time[r] to have prevented their destructive effects by gradual and progressive melioration of church and state, which both demanded correction. The systematic impolicy of France in seeking commercial and maritime aggrandizement by provoking that nation that can always ruin her trade and crush her navy, tended very powerfully to give a practical operation to the spirit of liberty. The immense expense incurred in the seven years war, causing fiscal derangements, was the chief source of those contentions with the provincial parliaments that principally distinguished the last years of Lewis XV. The actual opposition of these political bodies was perfectly justifiable, but called into action the prevailing theories, and paved the way for much more unrestrained efforts against the prince's power. Lewis XVI., kind and liberal by nature, was disposed to moderate in its exercise the rigour of his absolute power, and to accommodate his government to the sentiments which, without comprehending their precise nature or extent, he in general saw become prevalent among his subjects. The first years of his reign promised popularity to the prince with increasing happiness to his people. Repetition, however, of the same preposterous policy which had cost France so much blood and treasure, not only drove him to an unprovoked war with England, but to a war in which he was to support revolting subjects against their sovereign in which every argument that he could adduce in favour of the Americans might be employed with much greater force to vindicate a revolt of his own subjects. The intercourse of the French with the defenders of a republican constitution very rapidly increased an anti-monarchical spirit in a country predisposed

Cooperating political causes.

General impolicy and burdensome expense of the French wars against Britain.

r So early as the year 1772, Edmund Burke, in the theological scepticism and political hypotheses of the French writers, saw the probable overthrow of religion and government; and even in the house of commons mentioned his apprehension of the danger, and proposed to form an alliance among believers against (he said) those ministers of rebellious darkness who are endeavouring to shake all the works of God established in beauty and order.

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Enormous expenses and distressful consequences of the war to support the Americans.

Pecuniary embarrassments.

Schemes of extrication.

Convention of the notables.

r its reception. The enormous expenses incurred in ourishing America, and endeavouring to injure Britain, lunged France into unexampled distress, and the aggres- ion recoiled on the aggressor. An immense new debt as added to the old, the accumulation became intolerable. he multitude of the distinct loans which altogether com- sed this vast mass of debt, and the diversity of the con- ions upon which, according to the genius of the respec- e projectors, they had been raised, the numberless ropriations of specific revenues to particular funds, l the frequent infractions of these to supply the imme- te necessities of the state, occasioned such voluminous ailed accounts, such endless references,[a] explanations, l deficiencies, with such eternal crowds of figures, that whole presented a chaos of confusion, in which the nciers themselves seemed scarcely less bewildered than public. The taxes, numerous as they were, and nous in the last degree to the people, were totally qual to the supply of the current expenses of the state l to the discharge of the interest or annuities arising on various funds; new funds could not be raised, but the gencies of the state must be supplied. No effectual ans were devised but by withholding the annuities due he public creditors to the amount of the deficiency. is measure involved numbers in distress and calamity, l caused loud clamours: in a situation so disastrous, jects and projectors of relief multiplied. The wealth France was certainly very great, but the principal was he private repositories of ministers, contractors, com- ssioners, stockjobbers, farmers general, and the minions the court.

VERGENNES died in 1786 and was succeeded by Mon- eur de Calonne, who having in vain tried the experi- ent of new loans, the king proposed to assemble the tates, but was dissuaded by the court and ministry. If e states were assembled, they might, instead of granting pplies, begin their deliberations with demanding a re- ess of grievances. Monsieur de Calonne wished to avene the notables, an assembly deriving its name from

[a] See Annual Register, 1787, chap. vii.

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the members being men of rank and respectability. The ministers had endeavoured to prevail on the nobility and clergy to contribute a share spontaneously of those immense sums which through their exemptions they were presumed to have accumulated. The same influence, it was also hoped, would be successfully used in prevailing on the great moneyed capitalists to bring forward part of their stores for the relief of the nation. A proclamation was accordingly issued the 16th of December for holding this assembly.[t]

Calonne.

In an introductory speech Calonne contended that the public embarrassment arose from causes which were highly honourable to France, and the present reign, and, notwithstanding the immediate exigency, ultimately beneficial as well as glorious. A marine had been formed infinitely more powerful than any ever known in France; his majesty's fleets had sailed triumphant over the ocean, he had humbled the rival, and terminated an honourable war by a solid and permanent peace: devoting his attention to the public welfare, he had, since peace was established, invariably pursued extensive commerce abroad, and good administration at home. The minister had found the finances, when he was intrusted with their management, in a deplorable state; a vast unfunded debt, all annuities and interest greatly in arrear; all the coffers empty, the public stocks fallen to the lowest point, circulation interrupted, and all credit and confidence destroyed. He then showed the measures which he had pursued, and the happy effects it had produced (so far as his measures could reach) in remedying these complicated evils. He had, he said, reestablished public credit upon a sound basis, had undertaken great and expensive works of the highest national importance; but notwithstanding all those favourable appearances of prosperity, there was an evil every year increasing in magnitude, this was the great annual deficiency of the public revenue, and its inade-

He unfolds the dreadful state of the finances;

t It consisted of seven princes of the blood, nine dukes and peers of France, eight field marshals, twenty-two nobles, eight counsellors of state, four masters of requests, eleven archbishops and bishops, thirty-seven judges of parliament, twelve deputies of the pays d'etat, the lieutenant civil, and twenty-five magistrates of different towns; in all, one hundred and forty-four. See Macfarlane's history of George III. vol. iii. p. 345.

quacy to the national expense; to eradicate this evil was beyond the reach of ministers; additional taxes would oppress the people, whom the king wished of all things to relieve; anticipation on the revenue of subsequent years had already been practised to a ruinous extent; and the reduction of expense had been carried as far as was possible without weakening the state and government. In the reform of abuses, the king and his minister chiefly trusted to find a remedy for the evil. One of the most intolerable grievances which then prevailed, was the immunity of the most opulent classes from taxation; Calonne therefore proposed to equalise public burdens by rendering the taxes general; to accomplish this purpose, the nobility, clergy, and magistracies should be no longer exempted, but contribute their share to the exigencies of the state; the officers under the crown were to be assessed; and there should be a general impost on land, without excepting the possessions of any order or individual. Such a project, in whatsoever motives it originated, was certainly just in its principle, and efficient in its object, as a scheme of finance: as a measure of policy it was wise and equitable, since it proposed to restore to the commons so great a part of their usurped rights: but the minister did not show much judgment and prudence in the means which he chose for carrying his plan into execution. It was very improbable that the aristocratical corporations, to influence whom he had called the council of notables, would willingly recede from such lucrative immunities; indeed, the notables themselves consisted of members of the privileged orders, and might as a body be presumed unfavourable to a project tending so much to diminish their corporate advantages. They actually proved very inimical to the plan, which they represented as merely a new expedient for getting immense sums of money into the hands of government, to supply its extravagance and corruption; they refused to concur in the territorial impost, unless they were suffered to investigate the past expenses and accounts, and future estimates, as thereby only they could know how far public money had been, or was likely to be, applied for the national good. The privileged orders raised a general outcry against the

He proposes an equalisation of public burdens.

He incenses the privileged orders.

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Outcry against the minister.

man who had proposed to abolish their immunities: they even persuaded the other classes, that the sole object of the minister was rapacity, for the purposes of embezzlement and peculation; that, so far from intending to lighten their burdens by his new system of impost, he designed to load them with fresh taxes, and thus the aristocrats excited the hatred of the people against the minister, whose plan, if adopted and fairly executed, would have rendered to the people themselves so essential a service. Moreover, the queen was a great enemy to the minister, because he attacked one of her favourites. The mild and compliant Lewis readily imbibed the prevailing sentiment, and withdrew his confidence and regard from a man whom he saw distrusted and hated by so many others.

Disgraced: he retires into banishment. Brienne minister.

Calonne, fearing a judicial prosecution while the minds of all ranks were so biassed against him, retired into England.[u] Meanwhile monsieur de Brienne,[x] archbishop of Thoulouse, a leading member of the notables, was appointed prime minister, and without attempting the radical reform which the exigency required, he proposed and executed various partial improvements in the collection of taxes, and the management of the public money. It was manifest that a change so confined in principle and operation could not extricate the country from its present evils. By the new minister the assembly of notables was dissolved,[y] and he thought himself obliged to have recourse to the usual mode of raising money by edicts. Among the measures was a double poll tax, and a heavy stamp duty. The parliament of Paris remonstrated against the first subsidy, in terms very unlike the former language of their assemblies, even when they opposed the will of the king. Before they should concur in raising money, they required to be informed of the real state of the finances, and the purposes to which the new imposts were to be applied; and they particularly objected to the stamp duty; their requisition not having been admitted, they

Trifling and inefficient reform.

Contests with the parliament of Paris.

u This minister has been charged with having amassed immense riches by plundering the public. He certainly lived in London, for several years, in magnificent splendor; but what his funds were, or how acquired, was never ascertained.

x Bouillé on the French Revolution, p. 50.

y In the opinion of Bouillé, very unwisely, p. 51.

refused to enregister the edict. The king finding them inflexible to persuasion, held a bed of justice, to compel them to registration. This procedure, hateful in the reign of Lewis XV. was infinitely more odious at present, when the spirit of liberty was so much stronger and more generally diffused. The edict having been forcibly registered, the parliament PROTESTED, that not having been obtained by their approbation and consent, IT SHOULD NOT BE VALID; and that whoever attempted to put it in execution should be doomed to the galleys as a traitor. This resolute opposition was imitated by all the other parliaments. Matters now appeared to draw to a crisis; the alternative of the crown seemed to be, either to proceed to coercion, or to relinquish for ever the long usurped power of raising money by its own authority. On the other hand, the judicative bodies were determined to show that they would not, without resistance, any longer permit an arbitrary invasion of property, however supported by precedent. On the 24th of July the parliament of Paris published a remonstrance,[z] highly celebrated for a forcible reasoning, a bold and animated eloquence, which clearly demonstrated and strongly impressed awful truths. After a happy peace that had lasted five years, they, from the revenue before possessed by the crown, had trusted that no fresh imposts would have been proposed; great, then was their surprise at the requisition of an additional tax so extensive, and generally odious. Ministers had never approached the throne with a voice of truth, but had disguised from the king the actual state of his dominions, and the sentiments of his subjects. The council of the notables had been the occasion of discovering to the public the dreadful situation of affairs, and the progressive steps of error, corruption, and vice, by which courtiers had reduced France to such a condition. Taxes were the contributions of citizens for their own private security and the public safety; if they exceeded those purposes, they were inconsistent with justice and the good of the people, the sole objects of

1789. Attempts of the crown to overawe the refractory, unsuccessful.

Remonstrance of the parliament of Paris.

z See remonstrance, State Papers, July 24th, 1787.

ate government. Neither parliaments, nor any other authority but the whole nation assembled, could sanction a new impost. The nation only, being convened and instructed in the true state of the finances, could extirpate the abuses that actually existed, and offer resources to obviate such evils in future. If this remonstrance be considered in relation to the rights of a free people, and to the actual abuses under the French government; it was firm, yet perfectly temperate and respectful. Addressed, however, to a monarch who had inherited arbitrary power, it appeared a presumptuous encroachment. It was extremely natural for Lewis to think himself rightfully entitled to the sway of his ancestors; to overlook the injustice in which that dominion was founded, and the great change of popular sentiment from the time even of his last predecessor. Like Charles I. he presumed a divine right to what his ancestors and he had possessed only by human sufferance; and, like Charles I. he did not discern that the opinions and sentiments which had permitted thraldom, no longer existed among his subjects. Lewis, however, had a much more formidable force than Charles, in which he conceived he might repose secure confidence. He therefore determined on coercion; collected great bodies of troops round the metropolis; and sent parties of soldiers to the house of every individual member of the parliament of Paris, to carry him in banishment to Troyes, about seventy miles from the capital, and not to suffer him to write or speak to any person of his own family before his departure. These orders were executed at the same instant, on the 18th of August, and by force the judicial body was prevented from proceeding in its official business. In the following month the president was despatched by the exiles to Versailles, to represent to his majesty the pernicious effects of the compulsory measures which he was then pursuing. After several audiences, instead of adhering to the hereditary maxims of arbitrary power, the king yielded to the dictates of his individual benignity and patriotism; he consented to abandon the obnoxious attacks, and to suffer parliament to resume its functions. Meanwhile the flame of liberty

was bursting forth in various parts of the kingdom.[a] Other parliaments not only emulated, but surpassed the generous boldness of Paris, and with the right of property asserted the claims of personal security. The parliament of Grenoble declared *lettres de cachet*, or arbitrary imprisonment, to be totally unconstitutional; and pronounced a decree, rendering it capital for any person, under ANY authority, to attempt such an act within that province. In all the populous towns, where there was the most ready and extensive interchange of opinion and sentiment; the conduct of government, once so sacred in France, was openly discussed, and most severely reprobated, both in discourse and publications.[b] The king, in November, appeared to have changed his disposition and intentions: meeting the parliament of Paris, he said he had come to hear their opinions; but before they delivered them, to signify his own.[c] They ought to confine themselves to the functions intrusted by the king to their predecessors: the expediency of calling public assemblies was a measure of which he was the sole judge. He was about to issue an edict, creating for five successive years a loan that would require no new impost. Permission being given for every member to speak without restraint, a warm debate on the registration of the edict ensued in the presence of the king; but at last his majesty, suddenly rising, commanded the decree to be registered without delay. The duke of Orleans, first prince of the blood after the king's brothers, warmly opposed this order, as a direct infringement of parliamentary right; and protested against all the acts of the day, as thereby rendered void. His majesty, astonished at a proceeding so new to an absolute prince, repeated his order, and quitted the assembly. The next day he banished the duke and two of his most active supporters. The parliament, far from tamely submitting to this act of power, published a very strong address, which justified the exiled members, avowed the highest approbation of their conduct, and represented the dangerous consequences of such a restriction on the necessary freedom of speech.

Banishment of the active opposition-ists.

a Annual Register, 1787, chap. vii. passim. b Bertrand de Molleville, introduction. c State Papers, Nov. 19, 1787.

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The king answered, that he had strong reasons for the banishment of those members; with this assurance parliament ought to rest satisfied; the more goodness he was disposed to show to his parliaments, the more firmly he would approve himself if he saw his goodness abused.

Bold tone of parliament, and forcible address.

Parliament replied in the bold tone of men determined to assert their freedom; "your parliament does not *solicit* "favour, it DEMANDS justice. No man ought to be con- "demned without a fair trial: arbitrary banishments, "arrests, or imprisonments, constitute no part of the legal "prerogative of the French crown. It is in the name of "those laws which preserve the empire, in the name of "that liberty of which we are the respectful interpreters "and lawful mediators, in the name of your authority, of "which we are the first and most confidential ministers, "that we dare demand either the trial or the release of "the duke of Orleans and the exiled magistrates." This attack on a prerogative so long exercised by the court, and essential to the maintenance of arbitrary monarchy, was resisted by the king; and he told them, that what they demanded of his justice depended on his will. This principle that would subject the freedom and happiness of millions to the will of an individual, though the foundation of French absolute monarchy, the enlightened parliament totally condemned; they refused to purchase justice by concession; declared parliament would never cease to demand the impeachment or liberty of the persons in question, and would employ the same zeal and perseverance to ensure to every Frenchman the personal security promised by the laws, and due by the principles of the constitution.

The parliament of Paris asserts the rights of a free people

This patriotic assembly supported the claim in question, and urged new assertions, not for their own body alone, but for the whole nation. They published a remonstrance,[d] declaring that no taxes could be granted but by the consent of the people; they extended the same doctrine to the whole body of legislative power, insisting that no man ought to be imprisoned, dispossessed of his property or liberty, outlawed or banished, or in any way hurt or injured, unless through his own act, his representatives, or

d State Papers, Nov. 23d, 1787.

the law of the land.[e] The parliament[f] of Paris vindicated those fundamental rights, which no time, nor precedent, nor statute, nor positive institution can abolish, which men always may reclaim when they will. They endeavoured from history and authority to prove this popular consent to have been the foundation of laws in former times, before the subversion of the constitution under the house of Bourbon. The precedents which they quoted did not apply to the present situation, and indeed obscured instead of illustrating their claims. But as neither the justice or expendiency of the doctrine rested upon former usage or authority, the irrelevancy of their citations affected neither the truth of their positions, nor the wisdom of their conduct.

Spirit of boundless innovation.

THE spirit of liberty and reform, operating on the ingenious and volatile character of Frenchmen, and tinctured by the peculiar doctrines of late political philosophers, produced a disposition to innovation. Even at this period many reformers assumed a position, that every existing establishment was bad, and therefore that melioration consisted in a total change. The court imputed to parliaments the prevailing spirit, which these bodies rather expressed than incited; and, confounding the organs with the cause, formed a project for annulling the authority which was recently assumed by these bodies. Professing to gratify the popular passion for reform, ministers proposed a general amendment in the codes both

e See this doctrine stated by Hume in his remarks on the great charter of England, Hist. vol. ii. p. 88.

f The provincial parliaments of France were originally courts of justice, possessing no share in the legislation, either as an order or as representatives of the people. From the time of cardinal Richelieu, the legislative as well as the executive authority was vested entirely in the crown. The practice of employing the parliaments to enregister the king's edicts, was never intended to convey any authority or force through these bodies; they were considered merely as notaries, to record and authenticate their existence, and thereby as well to promulgate them, as to prevent any doubts being entertained by the public of their reality. The parliament, however, as their popularity and power increased, and times and circumstances proved favourable to the design, assumed a right of judging whether these edicts were injurious to the public. If they determined them to be hurtful, they by a legal fiction pretended that being contrary to the welfare of the people, and contrary to the king's wisdom, justice, or clemency, they did not believe them to be the king's real acts, but considered them as an imposition practised by his ministers; and on this ground they presented memorials or remonstrances to the king, placing in the strongest colours they could all the evil consequences which they presumed would attend their being passed into laws. See Annual Register, 1789.

civil and criminal justice. For this purpose, a tribu- was to be instituted, endowed with such powers as wo carry back the parliaments to the original princi- ple their institution, and reduce them to the condition courts of justice.[g] The members of this body to be chosen by the king:[h] their number and every stance relative to their meeting, was to depend on the al will. Profound secresy was observed in conducting project: the edicts were privately printed at the royal nd intended to be presented, on the same day to ... arliaments in France, and the registration was to b ..ed by soldiers. The scheme, however, being discovered before it was ripe for execution, by M. d'Epresmenil, was by him communicated to the parliament of Paris, of which he was a member. This body meeting on the 3d of May 1788, issued a declaration, stating a report of a conspiracy, by the court, against the authority of parliaments, the interests and liberties of the nation. Detailing the alleged rights of parliaments, and the purposes both of their general bestowal and recent exersise, they declared their resolution of surrendering their privileges, not to ministers, or any new courts established by their influence, but to the king himself, and the states general. Though Lewis had, as an act of grace, liberated Orleans and the magistrates, he still determined to support the principle of arbitrary imprisonment. Agreeably to this resolution, he ordered M. d'Epresmenil, and M. De Monsambert, two of the most active members of the parliament to be arrested in their houses. Though these patriots evaded immediate caption, by concealing themselves from the soldiers, they disdained to abstain from their duty in parliament. That body, informed of the attempt, sent a deputation to remonstrate with the king; but the delegates were not admitted. A regiment of guards surrounded the court of parliament; its commander entering the assembly, demanded the two magistrates whom the king had ordered to be arrested:

g Bouillé, p. 54. h They were to have consisted of princes of the blood; of peers of the realm; of great officers of state; of marshals of France; of governors of provinces; of knights of different orders; of members of council; and of a deputation of one member from each parliament of the kingdom, and two from the chamber of accounts and supply. Annual Register, 1789, c. i.

a profound silence for some time ensued; at last, the president rising, with the acclamations of the whole body, replied, every member here, is a d'Epresmenil, and a Monsambert.[i] These magistrates, however, surrendered themselves, and were led off to prison amid the loud execrations of the people. The king, on the 8th of May, held a bed of justice to introduce the intended reforms: he inveighed against the undutiful behaviour of parliament, and declared his determination to suppress such excesses, in a few of the magistrates; yet in general he preferred prevention to penal animadversion; he then announced the heads of the new constitution which his chancellor fully detailed.[k] Parliament the following day entered against these proceedings a protest, repeating the substance of their former remonstrances, and declaring individually and aggregately that they would accept of no employment under the projected establishment. This protestation was seconded by a great body of the members; and so generally was the new spirit now disseminated, that even many of the clergy declared concurrence in their sentiments and resolution. Thus encouraged, parliament published a still stronger memorial than any which they had before issued; peremptorily declaring their inflexible determination to persevere in their past measures. Through all the kingdom, both bodies, spontaneous associations, and private individuals, appeared to be agitated by the same spirit. The court, on the other hand, proceeded to coercive measures; the governor of Paris entering the parliament house, took possession of all the papers and archives; having locked the doors, and stamped them with the king's seal, he carried away the keys. All the other parliaments in the kingdom were suspended from their functions, and forbidden under the severest penalties to hold any meetings. In this crisis, the question now evidently lay between the establishment of liberty, or of complete despotism.[l] Brienne was by no means capable of conducting affairs in so difficult a situation; he possessed neither the sagacity which could have discovered the force of a general spirit diffused through a people of such

Arbitrary suspension of the parliaments.

National ferment.

i Annual Register, 1789, chap. i. Mackintosh's Vindiciæ Gallicæ.
k State Papers, May 8th. l Bouillé, *passim*.

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1789. Unfitness of Brienne for his office.

boldness and energy, nor the wisdom which, to a certain extent, would have gratified the national desire, in order to prevent the national violence; and moderated the regal power to preserve its essential and useful prerogative. He was no less deficient in that boldness of design, and vigour of execution, which only could have overborne the determination of the people, and crushed their rights. The ready and willing tool of arbitrary power in its usual and established exercise, he possessed neither invention nor courage to be its councellor and champion in untried dangers. The conduct of government was a motley mixture of outrage and irresolution, violence, and feeblenes: for a short time the court persisted in coercive efforts, both in Paris and other provinces; and in Dauphiny, Languedoc, and Brittany, the parliaments were exiled, but the rage of the people broke out in riots which produced disorder and bloodshed. In some instances it appeared, that the soldiers commanded to quell the disturbances, manifested an extreme unwillingness to act against their countrymen. The king was at this time in the greatest pecuniary distress, which he saw the people would not voluntarily relieve: nothing, he perceived, short of military execution would enforce the obnoxious edicts. Destitute of money, he lost a great part of the influence which through donative he had possessed; many of the nobility, from the extravagance of their ancestors, their own, or both, were mere dependents on the bounty of the crown; and in the poverty of the king they saw themselves precluded from the usual resource of titled insignificance and beggary; accustomed to luxury and splendor, and the eleemosynary fountain of their prodigality and ostentation no longer flowing, they from a special cause became infected with the general discontent; poor lords, who had subsisted by the royal dole, forsook the king when he had no dole to bestow.[m] The household of the monarch, extremely magnificent and expensive, had supported vast numbers of officers and attendants; in the king's distresses four hundred of these were necessarily dismissed; many of them, no longer maintained in idleness and pomp, turned against the hand which had given them food while

Distressed situation of the king.

m Annual Register, 1789.

it had food to give, and from the most despicable and unworthy motives added to the number of those who opposed the king's government from generous and patriotic principles. The discontents rising from political causes were enhanced by a physical calamity; a dreadful hurricane of wind, rain, hail, thunder and lightning, on the 13th of July, assailing the land, destroyed the fruits and corn. Want and misery were soon felt through the kingdom; and the capital itself was apprehensive of a famine. The dearness of provisions induced or compelled many families to dismiss their servants, and thus increased the number of the idle, distressed, and dissatisfied. To aggravate the danger which menaced the court from so many concurring causes, the wild theories of sophistical projectors, equally inimical to religion as to regular government, to beneficial liberty as to absolute monarchy, were fast gaining ground. In the latter end of 1788, the opponents of the king consisted of two great classes:—first, the champions of rational liberty, determined not only to prevent future encroachments, but to correct past usurpations; to change the government from an absolute to a limited monarchy; to render its object the general happiness, instead of the pleasure of individuals, its rule the national voice, instead of the monarch's will. The other class consisted of those who, not contented with an alteration of measures, sought an utter subversion of the establishment, and promoted doctrines and schemes, which would destroy all government: between these two extremes there were various gradations, from the supporters of limited monarchy to the levellers of all ranks and orders. The principal actors were at this time chiefly of the former division, or at least more nearly allied to it than to the latter; but subordinate agents, especially many of the literary men employed as efficacious instruments by the leaders, were closely connected with the votaries of boundless revolution. Many of the writers, in combatting absolute power to assist parliaments and vindicate the rights of the people, attacked all existing forms and establishments, and loosened the great cements of society.[n]

[n] Bertrand de Moleville on the French Revolution, v. i. c. i.

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THE minister seeing his sovereign in such calamitous circumstances, was more mindful of his own safety, than gratitude to his master; he resigned his office, and sought refuge in Italy. Lewis finding his own distresses, and those of his kingdom, multiplying, and that the arbitrary measures which were suggested by his ministers were producing effects so different from their predictions, and his wishes, resolved to adopt a new plan, more consistent with his own benignant character. To gratify the nation, and procure a counsellor likely to relieve the country and himself, he determined to recal the celebrated Mr. Neckar. From this gentleman, so universally popular, and, indeed, the idol of their adoration, the warm fancies of Frenchmen expected impossibilities. They seemed to have conceived that he possessed a kind of magical power, which could pay off an immense public debt without money, and supply twenty-five millions of people with corn and bread. But Neckar by no means possessed those extraordinary talents which were once imputed to him by the grateful subjects of Lewis, and by that monarch himself. Strict morals and integrity even his adversaries[o] ascribed to this celebrated economist; but the impartial philosopher[p] readily discovered that he was a mere man of detail; a skilful and upright steward, but not a profound statesman. "Neckar (says Bouillé) viewed France "with the eyes of a citizen of Geneva." Native of a republic, he was warmly attached to the rights and interests of the people; of plebeian extraction, he too little regarded the distinctions of rank and of birth, and estimated them by the abstract principles of equality, instead of the actual institutions of an established government in a great and powerful nation: his sentiments and habits of thinking were inimical to the privileged orders. Neckar was, individually, a man of immense riches, during a considerable part of his life, he had been chiefly conversant with moneyed capitalists, and naturally attributed more than its due share of importance to the distinction of wealth: hence, in every regulation which he should desire to frame, farmers of the revenue, contractors, bankers,

He resolves to recal Mr. Neckar,

o Bouillé, page 70. p Adam Smith.

and merchants, were likely to be more considered than the clergy or nobility: and from these various causes Neckar was chiefly attached to the third estate. With such notions and predilections he came to the administration of France, at a season which required a statesman and lawgiver that could survey the whole circumstances and interests of the empire without leaning either to clergy or laity, nobility or plebeians, to riches or to birth; and would provide impartially and effectually for the welfare of the whole.

On Mr. Neckar's appointment, the chief persons of Brienne's party were dismissed from office. The parliament of Paris was restored to its functions, met in the middle of September, and caused all the king's late decrees, which they represented as unconstitutional, to be publicly burnt. Mr. Neckar found the finances in so disordered a condition, that he advised a convocation of the states general as the only effectual measure for relief. He proposed, however, as a preliminary, to summon a new convocation of notables, who should deliver their opinion concerning the composition of the states general, the qualifications of the electors, and of the elected; the mode of election, the proportion of delegates to the wealth and populousness of the several districts; also, the amount and relation of members to be sent by the different orders, and the instructions which they were to receive from their constituents; and the 1st of May 1789, was the day appointed for the meeting of the states general.

who counsels the convocation of the states general.

Two great questions existed between the three orders, the nobles, the clergy, and the commons; first, whether all the deputies should meet in one assembly, wherein the concentrated power of the states general should reside, or whether they should be divided as they had been at the last meeting in 1614, into three chambers, through which a resolution must be carried (at least two of them) before it became the acknowledged act of the states.[q] Secondly, whether the number of deputies from each of the orders should be three hundred, as in 1614, or the clergy and nobles should retain their former numbers, and

Questions concerning the consolidation of the orders,

q Voting *by heads* was the term applied to the first of these alternatives, and voting *by orders* to the second.

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the commons send six hundred, so as to equal the amount of the other two estates: this was called the double representation of the people. These two questions agitated the public with great violence: if they voted by orders, a double representation would be of no effect, as the two estates could outvote the three; therefore, the double representation was proposed on the supposition that they were to vote by numbers. The arguments for three assemblies were founded on ancient usage; for one, upon justice and expediency. By the supporters of the last it was contended, that unless there was but one assembly the power of the commons would really be nugatory. The clergy and nobles would coalesce together to defend their immunities against the commons, who, in their own, maintained the general interests of the people. If their numbers were not equal to those of the other two orders, they could effect no purpose of important improvement. The aristocratical estates prevailing among the notables, that council voted for separate chambers. In their opinion concurred the parliament of Paris, which, though desirous of repressing the power of the crown, was inimical to the exaltation of the commons. Mr. Neckar inclined to the third estate, but at the same time professed a desire to preserve the necessary and useful prerogatives of the crown; but the means were not wisely adapted to the end. Neckar reasoned like an accountant rather than a statesman, and treated a question for constituting the legislation of a mighty nation, as if he had been summing up the items of a daybook in order to make an entry into a ledger: he thought that by equalising the *numbers* of the commons and the two privileged orders, the one would balance the other; the states general, like the parliament of England, would consist of two great branches of lawgivers, which, together with the king, might produce mutual support and reciprocal control; therefore he promoted the double representation. But though there would be thus an *arithmetical* equality between the two first orders and the third, perfectly satisfactory to an auditor of accounts, there was by no means that POLITICAL equality which would have satisfied a wise lawgiver, who proposed to establish an effectual

and the double representation.

balance in a constitution. If Neckar had discerned the actual state and party, he would have found that the partisans of the privileged orders among the commons were very few, that the partisans of the commons among the privileged orders were very many,[r] and therefore, that if they were equal in number, the commons would engross the power which he proposed to be separated. Intending that the aristocracy and democracy should be a mutual equipoise, Mr. Neckar, to whose opinion the king implicitly resigned himself, in no small degree contributed to the destruction of the one and predominancy of the other. The minister entirely neglected the question concerning the consolidation of the orders; an omission which prevented a corrective of the power which the commons were to obtain by the double representation. The parliament of Paris found they had lost their popularity by taking the side of the other privileged orders, and that they might regain the favour of the commons, published a decree which vindicated as the rights of a Frenchman, all the leading objects that have been attained, or indeed sought, by the best and most admired constitutions. The rights claimed, nearly the same as those secured to Englishmen, were such as must have contented all who understood both the extent and bounds of useful liberty. The chief heads of the decree were, that no assembly could be considered as national, unless it ascertained the following points in favour of the people: the periodical returns of the states general; no subsidy to be allowed, unless granted by the states; no law to be executed by the courts of justice, unless ratified by the states; the suppression of all taxes which marked the exemption of certain orders; equalisation of imposts; the responsibility of ministers; the right of the states general to bring accusations before the courts of justice for crimes; the abolition of arbitrary imprisonment, by bringing before the proper judges every man who was detained; and confirming the lawful freedom of the press. These claims were far from answering the ideas of liberty now spread

r See Annual Register, 1789.

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through France. The decree was regarded with indifference, and the parliament henceforward dwindled into insignificance. The year 1789 began with very great dissensions between the orders. The nobility and clergy, which, in 1787, had refused to part with their immunities, now expressed their willingness to take an equal share of the public burdens. The commons, far from being satisfied with this submission, proposed to overthrow all privileges whatsoever; to reject every claim founded on ancient usage, or on compact; to make general equality the standard of private or public right. The writers of the time employed their separate and joint ingenuity in attacking the rank and titles of the nobles, and the tenure by which many of them held their estates; and French liberty, in the beginning of 1789, was mingled with principles subversive of rank and of property. Until the meeting of the states, the question concerning the amalgamation of the orders agitated the nobles and commons, while the clergy appeared undecided, and ready to join the party which should prevail. It had been customary in France, in former times, when the states general met, for the orders in each district to deliver instructions to their respective delegates. This practice being now revived, the directions given to the deputies of the nobles, and to the deputies of the commons, by their respective constituents, very fully manifested the diversity of the spirit which actuated the three bodies. The instructions of the nobility enjoined their representatives to urge a reform of the constitution; to strengthen the securities for property, liberty, and life; and to surrender their pecuniary exemptions, but not resign their feudal rights, nor to consent to a consolidation of the orders. The commons, in their mandates to their commissioners, instructed them to insist on the abolition of all distinctions, the abandonment of feudal rights, and the resolution of the different states into one mass. The injunctions of the nobility tended, if followed, to establish a moderate and limited government, securing civil rights to all classes of subjects, but preserving a distinction of orders and a subordination of ranks. The injunctions of the commons,

The commons of France already desire a license too great for useful liberty.

Instructions from constituents to delegates.

previous to their first assembly, tended to overturn the other states under the weight of a democracy.[s]

1789. Meeting of the states.

On the first of May 1789, after a cessation of 175 years, the states general of France met for the first time. The parties which had prevailed throughout the kingdom appeared in the states general, and ranged themselves into three great divisions. The first was the aristocratic party determined to support the ancient form and mode of procedure, by a separation of the states into three chambers. This class was considerable from the ranks, talents, and situation of its members. The second division was that of the moderate party; its members were, on the one hand, averse to assemblies of three separate orders, as tending to throw the legislative power too much into the hands of the privileged states, and, instead of an unlimited monarchy, to establish an uncontroled aristocracy; on the other, they were inimical to the confusion of the orders, as tending instead of reforming, to subvert the government. These were desirous of forming the nobles and clergy into one house, upon a principle of reciprocal control, analogous to the British constitution. The third division was the great and formidable democratic party, seeking and tending to overbear all rank and distinctions. In this class were to be numbered some of the most conspicuous men of the other orders. The extraordinary abilities of Mirabeau were employed against that estate to which he himself belonged. The first prince of the blood was active in promoting factions tending to subvert the monarchy from which he derived his elevated rank and immense possessions.[t] Against the clergy appeared the bishop of Autun, carrying with him a great body of his brethren, and prepared to join the most violent com-

s Mr Lally Tolendal, in exhibiting the different views of the parties of this time, observes, the commons wished to conquer, the nobles wished to preserve what they already possessed; the clergy waited to see which side would be victorious, in order to join the conquerors.

t The yearly income of the Duke of Orleans was estimated at half a million sterling. A considerable part of this revenue was employed in acquiring popularity, and forming, from the idle and profligate rabble through the provinces, but especially in the city of Paris, a numerous body of retainers, ready to undertake any service, however desperate at his instance. If his views, as has been often asserted, were directed to the highest pinnacle of ambition, by a fatality which often accompanies wickedness, the measures which he pursued for the destruction of another, destroyed himself.

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mons in their democratic excesses. The Abbe Sieyes, an eminent disciple of the new philosophy, penetrating, crafty, and versatile, brought all his ability and address to support the faction which his discernment easily perceived about to be paramount. The literary men, a great and powerful class in circumstances that so much depended on public opinion, ranged themselves under the standard of the commons, pursuing measures so inimical to that tranquillity and prosperity which best nourish the pursuits of literature. The moneyed capitalists, proud of their wealth, and envious of the rank which their opulence could not attain, were foremost in instigating measures tending to the destruction of that property which only could prevent them from insignificance. Besides these classes, the third division included numbers of profligate spendthrifts, abounding in France, as in all luxurious countries, who wished for a change by which they hoped to be better, and knew they could not be worse.

Speech of the king.

THE States being met, his majesty, in a speech from the throne mentioned his reasons for convoking the assembly: he noticed the restless spirit of innovation, and the general discontent which prevailed among his people. A great object of the states he trusted, would be to remove those evils; and they would manifest in their proceedings that loyalty and attachment to the monarchy from which France derived such glory and benefit. The chancellor spoke of the advantages which accompanied a limited government, equally distant from despotism and anarchy.

Of Neckar.

Mr. Neckar then rising, excited in the audience the highest expectation. From him all parties trusted for the most full and accurate information concerning every important department of public affairs; strong practical reasoning, which would demonstrate what was wise and right to be done at such a crisis; with manly eloquence to inculcate the necessity of correspondent conduct; but all were totally disappointed: his speech was loose and declamatory, abounding in general maxims of morality and politics, which were obviously true, but in no way illustrated the momentous subjects of deliberation; and sentimental effusions, that asserted the wishes of the speaker for the happiness of France, without explaining any means for its

attainment. On the great subject of consolidation he said nothing decisive, he merely expressed a desire that the matter might be accommodated. Appointed by his sovereign to address the national representatives, who were assembled to deliberate on great public difficulties, he neither stated facts, nor proposed means leading to extrication; his harangue was totally inadequate to the office which he was chosen to discharge. The ministry were no less feeble and indecisive in their conduct than their language. The king at this time possessed all the legal authority of the kingdom; and though the states were met, they were not yet constituted, as the writs of election had not been examined. He, by his established authority might have instituted concerning their sessions, any regulations which should be conformable to ancient precedent and usage; and to have refused compliance with his directions would have been rebellion. Notwithstanding his possession of this power, his ministers most impolitically neglected the exercise of it to prevent the confusion of the orders, and thereby suffered the states to become a democratical assembly. The verification of their powers[u] afforded the first occasion to the commons of insisting that they should meet in one chamber. Encouraged by their own strength, and the backwardness of the ministers, they very boldly asserted, that unless the writs were verified in their presence, they could not admit their holders to a seat in the assembly, and that both nobles and clergy would be illegal meetings. The clergy wavered; many of the nobility were firm in maintaining the rights of a separate verification, but there were great dissensions in that body. The commons, on the other hand were united. Mr. Neckar proposed conciliatory measures, which, from their indecisiveness, satisfied neither party. The nobles remaining inflexible, the commons, by a still bolder stretch of their power and influence, declared that they would con-

Disunion and indecision of the nobles and clergy.

u Each member was obliged, before the commencement of public business, to present his writ of election upon the table of the chamber to which he belonged. Commissaries were then appointed by each order to examine the authenticity of all the writs immediately belonging to itself; and until this business was finished, which usually took up several days, the states general were destitute of all legal authority whatsoever. The sanction of these commissaries to the authenticity of the writs, afforded what was called the *verification of powers*.

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The commons declare themselves a national assembly.

stitute themselves into an active assembly, and proceed to legislative business. Many of the clergy, seeing the commons prevalent, flocked to their hall, and were most joyfully received. The commons executed the resolution which they had formed, and constituted themselves, in a meeting which they denominated the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. This body so formed by its own act, rapidly advanced in the assumption of power. On the 17th of June they published a decree, intimating that they possessed the sovereign authority, and exercised the same by this popular act, declaring all existing taxes to be illegal. The king was alarmed at proceedings which changed the constitution, and tended speedily to draw the supreme authority into the democratic vortex: and began to be dissatisfied with his ministers, to whose irresolution and inexperience he now imputed the progress of ambitious violence. The princes and other votaries of the old government, exhorted him to vigorous measures;[y] they advised him to hold a royal session in the hall of the states general, which by assembling would suspend the meeting of that body. The king agreed to follow the advice, and on the 20th of June he issued a proclamation appointing the 22d for that purpose. The majority of the clergy having now agreed to join the commons, the members of the third estate repaired to the hall. The king having appointed the same day for the royal session, the guards were ordered to keep that apartment clear until the arrival of his majesty. As the members of the assembly came to the door, they were refused admittance by the soldiers; the commons, from so violent an act, apprehending an immediate dissolution, retired to an old tennis court, where they bound themselves by a solemn oath never to part until the constitution was completed. The majority of the clergy now joined the commons, and met them in St. Louis's church, on the 23d. The royal session being opened, his majesty proposed the outlines of a new constitution: he engaged to establish no fresh tax, nor to prolong an old impost beyond the term assigned by the laws, without the consent of the representatives of the nation; he renounced the right of borrowing

x Bertrand, vol. i. 69. y Bertrand, chap. ii.

money, unless with the approbation of the states; there should be an end of pecuniary exemptions; and *lettres de cachet* should cease, with some modifications. He condemned the late decree of the commons, which assumed by their own sole act, the whole legislative power of the kingdom; and concluded that none of the laws established in the present states general could ever be altered, but by the free consent of future states general, and that they should be considered as equally sacred with all other national properties. On the other hand he declared that all tithes and feudal rents should be accounted property, and therefore sacred; and that the states should be assembled in three chambers instead of one. The manner of the address by no means suited the conciliatory professions, nor indeed the substance of the proposition. It frequently introduced the king's will as the foundation of grants which in a government intended to be free were RIGHTS, not *favours*. In themselves, however, the propositions were such as a few years before, political sagacity could have not conceived that a king of France would offer to his subjects. His majesty commanded them to separate, and to meet the next day in the halls of their respective orders. Equitable as the plan was in itself, it required little penetration to perceive, that it would by no means meet the ideas of the commons; that the magisterial expressions would render it still more unpalatable, and were therefore extremely unwise. The commons listened in haughty silence, while the plan was reading; and as soon as the king departed, absolutely refused to break up their session. The king's attendants having reminded them of his majesty's order, the president answered, THE NATION ASSEMBLED HAS NO ORDERS TO RECEIVE.[z] They passed a resolution declaring the adherence of the assembly to its former decree: and another pronouncing the persons of the deputies sacred and inviolable. The populace at Versailles became violent in behalf of the commons. At Paris the ferment was still more outrage-

z Mirabeau, who through some acts and some suspicions had nearly lost his popularity, had the fortune upon this occasion to recover it with increase, by the impetuosity with which he told the king's attendants, that nothing but the points of bayonets should force them out of their chamber.

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Popular violence.

ous[a], and increased in proportion to the attempts of either the nobles or the court, to oppose or control the pretensions of the third estate. The commons now found themselves so strong in the public support, that they affected to treat the king's system and declaration as too insignificant to merit consideration or answer. On the 24th of June, the count de Clermont moved, that the nobles should unite with the commons, and was ably joined by monsieur de Lally Tollendal; but the majority of nobles, would not bend to a proposal which the natural prepossession of birth, rank, and custom, taught them to deem humiliating. Many of that body, however, were either connected with the popular party, or convinced that inflexibility would answer no purpose; and therefore joined the assembly. The people became hourly more violent against the majority of the nobles, whom they deemed refractory: outrage and bloodshed were expected. The members of this self created assembly had far exceeded the instructions of their constituents; in assuming the legislative power, they were not the representatives of the people; they were a strong and numerous faction, that usurped the office of lawgivers by force; by force only could usurpation have been opposed. Concession never did nor can avert the encroachments of determined ambition. This was the language which the princes of the blood,[b] and all the firmest friends of the monarchy held; it was indeed not the language of choice, but necessity. From the attempt of the popular faction to seize the direction of the empire, the simple question with the votaries of monarchy was, shall we defend ourselves or be overwhelmed? There was no alternative. The king was uniformly impelled by humanity, and in the mildness of his disposition, seeking the good

Firmness in the nobles.

a No class of rioters was more active in the French capital than the (poissardes) fish women; who, in addition to the violence of their sisters in our own metropolis, possessed all the Gallic vivacity. Far exceeding the Billingsgate fair, instead of confining themselves to volubility of invective, from time immemorial they had acted a distinguished part in Parisian mobs, and were noted for their ferocious actions. On so great an occasion they were not slow in displaying their zeal and their talents. The sex likewise afforded another class of auxiliaries, more insinuating, less savage in appearance, but not less effective. These were the courtezans, whose numbers were immense in that profligate city. One of the chief scenes of disorder and enormity was the garden of the duke of Orleans, whither the mob daily resorted, where hired orators inflamed them to every act of atrocious violence. b See Bertrand.

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of his people, he deviated from that firmness by which only their welfare could have been effectually secured. To avert the dangers which he conceived to impend over the unyielding nobles, he entreated that order to give up their judgment and determination to the wishes of the governing faction. On the 27th of June he sent the following message to the nobles, by their president the duke of Luxemburgh: "From the fidelity and affection of the order of which you are president, I expect its union with "the other two. I have reflected upon it, and am determined to make every sacrifice *rather than that a single "man should perish on my account.* Tell the order of the "nobility, therefore, that I entreat them to join the other "two estates; and if this be not enough, I command them "to do it as their king—it is my will. If there be one of its "members who believes himself bound by his instructions, "his oath, or his honour, to remain in the chamber, let me "know: I will go and sit by him, and die with him if it be "necessary!" A long and violent debate took place, in which the duke of Luxemburgh read a letter from the count d'Artois, intimating that the king's person might be exposed to immediate danger, if the popular fury was roused by their refusal. The question of union was at last carried in the affirmative, and the nobles repaired to the hall of the commons that evening. The proposed meeting of the orders became a popular convention; and, from this moment, the constitution of France may be considered as actually changed, although the commencement of the revolution be dated from a subsequent period. The popular leaders now saw that imperious demand would extort concession; and on this discovery they formed their judgment, and regulated their conduct.

The king exhorts them to yield.

At his majesty's instance they unite with the commons

THE people, seeing the orders united, believed the happiness of France on the eve of completion. All parties agreed on the necessity of correcting the ancient government; the only difference appeared to be respecting the extent to which the reform should be carried, and the means that should be employed. It was hoped that the presence of the nobility and clergy, containing, besides rank, so much of talents and of learning, might restrain the intemperate heat of republicans, while the ardent zeal

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and bold freedom of the commons might inspire and invigorate the other states; and that thus they should establish liberty without licentiousness; but these expectations were entirely disappointed. The conduct of the court, having before exhibited such a mixture of rashness and timidity, violence and irresolution, consistent in weakness and fluctuation only, soon presented appearances that excited considerable alarm, but much greater suspicion. The states general, since their consolidation, had been more moderate than at any other period of their session. They had already appointed a committee to prepare materials for the new constitution: monsieurs Lally Tollendal, and Mounier, two of the most able and temperate leaders, were of this committee; and entertained flattering hopes that the moderation would prove general. The demagogues very early endeavoured to cultivate a close connexion between their votaries and the soldiers, and successfully instilled the popular doctrines into these troops. In seducing the army from obedience to their king, the democrats very liberally employed wine, gold, and women, of which last article they had an abundant supply by their alliance with the harlots of Paris. The soldiers now having their professional daringness and debauchery, without the professional restraints of subordination and military discipline, totally disregarded their officers; left their barracks without leave, repaired to the Palais Royal, joined and even headed the mob in their most enormous excesses, while hand bills and ballads were composed and dispersed, to spread the flames. The soldiers vied with the populace in their democratic exclamations and other excesses: the most daring and refractory being committed to prison, the people flew in crowds to the jail, forced the gates, liberated the captives, and demanded for them a free pardon. The national assembly endeavoured to accommodate the matter, by exhorting the Parisians to tranquillity, and the king to clemency. His majesty having no efficient force at hand was obliged to comply, and thus ended military discipline and civil government at Paris.

The soldiers are infected with the popular enthusiasm.

Insubordination and licentiousness.

The disorderly state of the metropolis, and the unfitness of the guards for reestablishing tranquillity were ostensible reasons for bringing a great armed force from

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the different provinces. In the beginning of July about thirty-five thousand men drew near Paris and Versailles. On the tenth of the month the national assembly presented very strong remonstrances to the king on the approach of the forces. He answered that he had no other motive for his conduct, than the necessity of establishing and maintaining good order in the capital. He was so far from intending to interrupt the proceedings of the assembly, that if the presence of the soldiery gave them umbrage, he was ready to transfer the states general to Noyon, or Soissons, and repair himself to some place in its vicinity, where he could maintain a ready communication with the legislative body. The moderate members were willing to accede to this proposal; but the popular leaders were aware of the strength which they derived from the capital, and would not leave its vicinity. They either reposed, or professed to repose, no confidence in the king's assurances, and gave out that a plot was formed by the court to crush the nascent liberties of Frenchmen. The king now appeared evidently to listen to the supporters of the old government, and withdrew his confidence from those counsellors who had been favourable to popular measures. The partisans of the ancient monarchy severely reprobated the conduct of Neckar, to whose republican sentiments and counsels they imputed the degraded state of royal authority; and strongly urged the king to discharge a servant who from either design or imprudence[c] had endangered the monarchy. Accordingly on the 11th of July, Mr. Neckar was dismissed[d] from administration, and ordered to quit the kingdom, and with him the other members of the cabinet were also discharged from their employments. Mr. de Breteuil, a zealous friend of the old government, was appointed prime minister, and marshal Broglio, who maintained the

The king orders troops to approach Paris.

M. Neckar dismissed.

c Bertrand, vol. i. p. 191.

d Mr. *Neckar* kept his disgrace a profound secret, even from his wife, and received company that day at dinner, as usual. Those who dined with him did not perceive the least alteration in his countenance. After dinner his wife and daughter invited him to take a ride to the Val, a country house situated in the forest of *St. Germain*, belonging to madame *de Beauvais*, an intimate friend of Mrs. Neckar's. He consented, and went into the carriage with his wife, but instead of going to the Val, he took the road to Brussels, in order to be the sooner out of the kingdom.

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same sentiments, commander in chief. On Sunday the 12th of July, these changes being reported at Paris, caused the greatest despair and fury, and riots prevailed in every quarter. The rashness of the prince de Lambese, who, endeavouring to disperse a riotous body of populace, wounded with his own hand, one who was said to be only a spectator, not only increased the tumult, but hastened the general insurrection for which the people were so ripe. The mob, with clubs, spits, and such weapons as they could procure, rushed upon Lambese's troops, and put them to flight, not without killing some of the number.[e] The following night Paris was filled with a dread of slaughter from the army, and of general plunder from the multitudes of miscreants with which that vast metropolis abounded; but prompt in expedient, they next day generally armed, formed themselves into one great body with the professed intention of securing internal order, and defending themselves against external enemies. They adopted a peculiar cockade for the purpose; and thirty thousand citizens totally unaccustomed to arms, were soon seen completely accoutred, and in a few hours assumed the appearance of order and discipline. The national volunteers came in a body to proffer to the people their service, which was most joyfully accepted. Directed by the popular leaders, and instructed by their military auxiliaries, the armed citizens prepared to defend the capital against the approaching troops. They threw up intrenchments, and formed baricadoes in different parts of the suburbs. A permanent council was appointed to sit night and day at the Hotel de Ville; and a communica-

An army of volunteers is immediately raised.

The national cockade.

e This transaction of Lambese's appears to have been without any orders from the ministers, or any concert with the other military commanders. Though there were several regiments of foot stationed close to Paris, none of them stirred to assist and protect Lambese's corps. The total inaction of the troops, both on the succeeding day and night, during all which time, critical as the season was, and notwithstanding the preparations they knew to be making in Paris, they never attempted to enter the city, seems to exculpate the court and ministers from the bloody designs imputed to them by the popular party. If such a scheme had been proposed, this would have been the season for its execution, when prevalent confusion and terror would have prevented any effectual plan of resistance. Weakness and folly, indeed, chiefly characterised the ministerial councils of the time. Knowing that in former periods the very appearance of troops had intimidated the Parisian populace, they without adverting to the total change of sentiments and circumstances, seem vainly to have expected the same effect at present.

tion was established between this body and the national assembly. In the course of this day, various robberies being committed, the multitude seizing some of the thieves in the fact, dragged them instantly to the Greve, the common place of execution, and hanged them by the ropes which were used to fasten the lantherns. Hence originated that most horrid practice of the French mob, making themselves judges and executioners in the same instant, without the smallest regard to law or justice, rank, age, or sex.

They attack the royal magazines to procure arms.

THE next day was the celebrated 14th of July. The new army, early in the morning, attacked the Hotel des Invalids, and taking it by surprise, seized a large magazine of arms and ammunition; thence they proceeded to the *Garde Meuble*, or ancient armoury, forced it open, and distributing the contents among their own body, completed their means for defensive and offensive operations. They now conceived a much bolder design, which was to seize the Bastile; but aware that this fortress was very strong, and amply supplied with provisions for standing a siege, they bethought themselves of attempting stratagem; they accordingly negotiated with the marquis de Launay, and coming to the gates, demanded arms and ammunition. The governor appearing to comply with this requisition, the gates were opened; a great number being admitted over the first bridge, the bridges were drawn up; in a short time a discharge of musketry was heard; but whether from a preconcerted scheme of De Launay, or provoked by the intemperate violence of the citizens, has never been ascertained.[f] But whoever might be the

f The testimonies on this subject are so extremely contradictory, that an impartial judge would find very great difficulty in developing truth, amidst the exaggerations of infuriated passions. Where we can place no reliance on the declarations of witnesses, our opinions must be formed from probability. De Launay could expect no advantage to the royal cause from this partial massacre. Instead of intimidating, he must have seen that it would inflame the Parisians to still more violent outrages. The cruelty imputed by the popular hypotheses was not found in any one authenticated instance to be a part of the royal policy. What purpose could it serve, from what motive could it spring? On the part of De Launay, this hypothesis implies, that from mere wanton barbarity he perpetrated mischief tending most powerfully to ruin himself, and injure his master's cause. Such a supposition is, no doubt, within the verge of possibility, but another view appears much more probable. The Parisians were in a state of the most violent rage and indignation against every supporter of government, and gave full vent to their passions both in words and actions. The Bastile they considered as a great bulwark of despotism, and the receptacle of its most miser-

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aggressors, when the firing was heard, the passions of the populace were inflamed to such enthusiasm and fury, that the Bastile, the citadel of Paris, with its seemingly impassable ditches, and its inaccessible towers and ramparts, covered with a powerful artillery, was, after an attack of two hours, carried by storm. De Launay was immediately dragged to the Place de Greve, and miserably murdered. M. de Losme, the major of the Bastile, met with a similar fate, and equal cruelty. When the place was captured, the Parisians loudly exclaimed, let us hang the whole garrison; but the prisoners were saved by the intercession of the national troops. The popular rage now manifested itself in a species of savageness long unknown in civilized Europe. They insulted and mutilated the remains of the dead, and exhibited their heads upon pikes to applauding multitudes; so dreadful were the ingredients already mingled with Gallic liberty. The victorious Parisians, exploring the gloomy dungeons of oppression, in expectation of delivering numbers of unfortunate victims, to their great surprise and disappointment, found only seven captives, four of whom were confined on charges of forgery, and three only were state criminals. So little was this engine of tyranny employed under the mild and humane Lewis XVI. When the capture of the Bastile was reported at Versailles, the ministers at first treated it as an extravagant fiction of the democratic party, but they were soon too well assured of the fatal truth. In this situation they formed the absurd resolution of keeping the king in ignorance of what had passed, and urged Broglio to proceed immediately to the reduction of Paris; but he answered, that his troops were infected with the popular spirit, and that he could not rely on their efforts. The ministers and the princes were soon convinced that opposition would be ineffectual, and began to provide for their own safety. The count de Artois had hitherto used every effort to inspirit the king, and to prevent the downfal of the whole

able victims: entered into that gloomy mansion, whose horrors had so much occupied their imaginations, and stimulated their passions: and viewing its guards, whom they considered as the minions of atrocious tyranny, nothing could be more likely than that their conduct to the soldiers would be abusive, insulting, and furiously intemperate, and that thence quarrels might arise leading to a bloody catastrophe.

fabric; but he now saw that the attempt was hopeless. At midnight, the duke de Liencourt, who was master of the wardrobe, forced his way into his majesty's apartment, and informed him of the whole. The king resolved on the most unconditional submission to the national assembly; and repairing thither without guards, early in the morning, he declared he resigned himself into their hands; and thus, deserted by its most efficacious supporters, attacked by the combined efforts of the people, and relinquished by its possessor, fell the absolute monarchy of France; and here the historical reader may date the commencement of the French revolution.[g]

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Lewis arrived in the national assembly, and having declared that his sole reliance was on their wisdom and patriotism, entreated them to use their power for the salvation of the state. He informed them, that he had ordered all the troops to quit the neighbourhood of Paris and Versailles: the Parisians however being still afraid of sieges and blockades, proceeded with preparations for defence. They appointed M. La Fayette commander of their armed corps, to which they gave the name of National Guards. The capital was now a great republic, and it soon was so sensible of its power, as to give the law, not only to the unfortunate sovereign, but to the national assembly and the whole kingdom. The national assembly sent a deputation, consisting of eighty-four members, with a view of restoring tranquillity. The Parisians received the deputies with every mark of respect and applause, but expressed a desire that the king himself should visit the city of Paris. This humiliating measure Lewis carried into execution on Friday the 17th of July, under a full conviction that he thereby encountered the peril of instant assassination. He was received by a body of twenty-five thousand national guards; and thus led in a melancholy

g The susceptibility of the French character renders that people very easily impressed by any address to their senses, imagination, or passions. A song that was composed about this time had a still stronger effect than even that which is ascribed by our historian to the celebrated air Lillibullero:* this was the famous *Ca Ira*, both in the words and music skilfully adapted to the impetuous ardour of impassioned Frenchmen: in rapid strains and expressions, it announced the immediate downfal of existing establishments.

* See Hume, vol. vii. p. 251.

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procession, amidst the loud and continued acclamations of *Vive la nation*, while the ancient favourite cry of *Vive le roi* was not once heard. Being conducted to the hotel, he was obliged to accept the new cockade, and to hear an harangue from the popular leaders, charging the court with all the cruel designs that were reported to have been formed against the city of Paris. Having so clearly and positively denied this imputation, as to impress conviction on the most democratical of his hearers, he returned safely to Versailles, to the great joy of his friends, many of whom never expected to see him again. Meanwhile the princes, and some of the chief nobility, with many of the inferior courtiers, perceiving the popular party paramount, sought safety in flight. The national assembly having signified a wish that Mr. Neckar[i] should be recalled, that minister was invited to return to Paris, and other popular ministers were appointed. Some degree of tranquillity having been reestablished at Paris, the national assembly proceeded to the formation of a new constitution. As the groundwork on which they were to build a fabric, they began with forming a declaration of rights. This manifesto was introduced by a remark tending to show, that the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of human rights, are the sole causes of public misfortunes, and to avoid these evils, that it was necessary to define and explain those rights. The declaration contains the outlines of the doctrines afterwards held out by the various revolutionists, and, indeed, is the text that has given rise to the principal class of the comments so long the subject of literary and political discussion. Here was the noted principle brought forward which founded legitimate government upon the NATURAL RIGHTS OF MAN. This theory, however, supposing mankind susceptible of perfection, deduces its inferences from an assumption which it neither did nor could prove, and which daily experience disproved. Many of the remarks are, no doubt, abstractly true; but they are useless, because they do not apply to circumstances

Declaration of rights:

i Mr. Neckar was welcomed both at Versailles and Paris, with such demonstrations of general and excessive joy, that democratic writers compared it to the transports of the Romans on the return of Cicero from banishment.

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either existing or likely to exist:[k] on this basis they proceeded to raise the new constitution.

its fundamental principle the Rights of Man.

k The following is a copy of the declaration of rights, consisting of seventeen articles:

I. Men were born, and always continue, equal in respect of their rights; civil distinctions, therefore, can be founded only on public utility.

II. The end of all political associations is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man; and these rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance of oppression.

III. The nation is essentially the source of all sovereignty; nor can any individual, or any body of men, be entitled to any authority which is not expressly derived from it.

IV. Political Liberty consists in the power of doing whatever does not injure another. The exercise of the natural rights of every man has no other limits than those which are necessary to secure to every other man the free exercise of the same rights; and these limits are determinable only by the law.

V. The law ought to prohibit only actions hurtful to society. What is not prohibited by the law should not be hindered; nor should any one be compelled to that which the law does not require.

VI. The law is an expression of the will of the community. All citizens have a right to concur, either personally, or by their representatives, in its formation. It should be the same to all, whether it protects or punishes; and all being equal in its sight, are equally eligible to all honours, places, and employments, according to their different abilities, without any other distinction than that created by their virtues and talents.

VII. No man should be accused, arrested, or held in confinement, except in cases determined by the law, and according to the forms which it has prescribed. All who promote, solicit, execute, or cause to be executed, arbitrary orders, ought to be punished: and every citizen called upon or apprehended by virtue of the law, ought immediately to obey, and renders himself culpable by resistance.

VIII. The law ought to impose no other penalties than such as are absolutely and evidently necessary; and no one ought to be punished, but in virtue of a law promulgated before the offence, and legally applied.

IX. Every man being presumed innocent till he has been convicted, whenever his detention becomes indispensable, all rigour to him, more than is necessary to secure his person, ought to be provided against by the law.

X. No man ought to be molested on account of his opinions, not even on account of his religious opinions, provided his avowal of them does not disturb the public order established by the law.

XI. The unrestrained communication of thoughts and opinions, being one of the most precious rights of man, every citizen may speak, write, or publish freely, provided he is responsible for the use of his liberty in cases determined by law.

XII. A public force being necessary to give security to the rights of men and of citizens, that force is instituted for the benefit of the community, and not for the particular benefit of the persons to whom it is intrusted.

XIII. A common contribution being necessary for the support of the public force, and for defraying the other expenses of government, it ought to be divided equally among the members of the community, according to their abilities.

XIV. Every citizen has a right, either by himself or his representatives, to a free voice in determining the necessity of public contributions, the appropriation of them, and of their amount, modes of assessment, and duration.

XV. Every community has a right to demand of all its agents, an account of their conduct.

XVI. Every community in which a separation of powers and a security of rights is not provided for, wants a constitution.

XVII. The right to property being inviolable and sacred, no one ought to be deprived of it, except in cases of evident public necessity, legally ascertained, and on the condition of a previous just indemnity.

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First acts of the French revolutionists.

Great object to subvert establishments.

THE practical operation of the principles immediately manifested itself in the acts and proceedings of the national assembly, and the various classes of the French revolutionists. Manifold were the subjects of consideration; but the great and general object was subversion of establishment. In prosecuting this purpose, the energy, susceptibility, and violence of the French character, were clearly displayed. Freed from all the restraints which not only superstition and despotism, but religious and salutary control, had formerly imposed, they now gave full vent to their dispositions. Their natural ardour was farther goaded to fury by demagogues. The licentiousness of the press even exceeded the licentiousness of the mob, and most powerfully prompted its atrocity. Twenty thousand literary men were daily and hourly employed, not as became superior ability and knowledge, in restraining vicious passions, and in teaching the ignorant the way to virtue and happiness, but in exhorting and stimulating them to outrageous actions. Never was intellectual superiority more disgracefully debased by the venal panegyrist of corrupted courts, or the hired encomiast of titled stupidity and insignificance, than by these adulators of an infuriate populace. But even in scheming and promoting anarchy and disorder, the inventive, bold, and ready genius of Frenchmen appeared. A confederacy was framed which in its institution and effects, exhibited a new phenomenon in the history of political organs. A combination was first formed of literary men, to associate under the name of a *club*, at their meetings to concert measures which might give the tone to the mob, and through their overbearing influence direct the decrees of the national assembly, and the acts of all municipal, judicial, and executive bodies, and thus make the whole power of France ultimately depend upon their resolves. These demagogues invited into their society such of the populace as they conceived likely to become useful instruments, and exhorted them to construct other clubs, both in Paris, and through all the provinces; and that such meetings should be connected, or to use a new revolutionary metaphor, *affiliated* together. These conventicles consisted first of literary votaries of the new philosophy, who promulgated and

Licentiousness of the press.

Twenty thousand literary men stimulate the mob to outrage.

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inculcated suitable doctrines, sentiments, and conduct. One of the clubs meeting in a convent formerly belonging to the jacobins, assumed the name of Jacobin Club,[l] which afterwards extending to appendant societies, gained a superiority over the rest, and became so noted throughout the world. In the first deliberations of the national assembly, these societies, guided by literary demagogues, and directing the populace, had a powerful influence. Many of the lawgivers were indeed members of the new institutions; and those who were most inimical to the existing establishments, and to rank and property, were held in the highest estimation, and were really the directors of the revolutionists. Various in detail as were the precepts of these innovators, in principle and object they were simple and uniform. Their lessons of instruction, or exhortations to practise, may be compressed in a few words. Religion is all folly: disregard religion and its ministers. Every establishment is contrary to natural right; pull down establishments. Order is an incroachment upon natural freedom; overturn all order. Property is an infringement upon natural equality; confiscate all property.[m] Such was the system generally received in the enthusiasm of reform, through a most extensive and populous nation, distinguished for promptness and fertility of genius, for boldness and activity of character, and by its very virtues rendering its errors more extensively pernicious. To follow through the various and manifold details, the doctrines and objects which guided the national assembly, would be foreign to our history; but assuredly it belongs to our subject to sketch the spirit and principal operations of a revolutionary system by which Britain was so essentially affected.

An engine of government new in the history of political establishments.

Clubs. Their influence extended by affiliation.

The licentiousness of Paris spreads through the provinces; and the peasants, having been long severely oppressed by seignorial tenures and privileges, conceived themselves now emancipated, and turned upon the proprietors with the most outrageous violence.[n] Reports of robberies, rapes, and murders daily reached the assembly. Landed proprietors apprehended the plunder of their pro-

Lawless violence in the country.

The peasants turn on the proprietors.

l Annual Register, 1790, chap, i. tions at Paris, 1789, passim.

m See revolutionary publica-

n Bertrand, vol. I. c. xi.

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perty; and some of the nobility, whose possessions were very great, were seized with a sudden impulse of sacrificing a large portion to secure the rest. On the 4th of August, the viscount de Noailles, and the duke d'Aguilon, proposed an equalisation of taxes, and an abolition of feudal services. This offer striking the assembly and galleries with the warmest admiration, excited in the other proprietors a wish to emulate conduct which was so highly applauded. The nobles and clergy vied with each other in surrendering privileges of their orders, and both these estates concluded with sacrificing their manerial jurisdictions. So far there was nothing but voluntary cession, directed by preventive policy, and stimulated by praise, or flowing from enthusiasm. The next day it was proposed that tythes should be abolished, and church property should be seized by the state. This proposition the clergy eagerly combatted, but their remonstrances were ineffectual; and at one blow all the immense property of such a numerous body was confiscated, without the least allegation of delinquency. The Abbe Sieyes, though a friend to the revolution, strongly remonstrated against this forfeiture, as commencing freedom with iniquity.[o] But the sound reasoning, even of a partisan, was unavailing against determined rapacity. Equality being the professed object of the revolutionists, it was proposed that all the provincial distinctions, the peculiar rights and privileges of each district should be abolished, and that, without any local diversity and immunity, or any regard to particular customs, usages, and prescriptions, the whole nation should be consolidated into one compact body. The deputies of privileged towns and districts surrendered the immunities of their constituents, all exclusive claims in every part of France were resigned; and the provinces which had possessed the right of taxing themselves, renounced the power of taxation. The parliaments which had so long held the judicial authority of France, and had been considered as the able, upright, and intrepid guardians of the public welfare, were annihilated. All the canon, ecclesiastical, and political codes of law, all the claims of the court of Rome,

Some of the nobility propose to sacrifice a large portion of their privileges and property.

Admiration of the commons.

Proposition for the seizure of church property.

Remonstrances of the clergy disregarded.

Parliaments are annihilated.

Immunities are sacrificed.

o Bertrand, vol. i. chap. xii. and xiii.

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all the fees or taxes which it heretofore received, were abolished. Even the very systems of theology and metaphysics, which had prevailed for so many ages, fell, not under the regular and well conducted force of reason, but the furious rage of innovation. In a few days the whole law and policy of the nation were changed, a great part of its property was disarranged; and every thing had altered its ancient form and aspect. A revolution more comprehensive and complete in its objects, as well as more minute and particular in its details, than any which is recorded in the annals of mankind, was carried into effect by an assembly of men professing to deliberate, with little more reflection or discussion, than in a senate of prudent lawgivers and statesmen, would have been bestowed on the most ordinary municipal or local regulation. The nobility and clergy in the provinces, not having been impressed with the impassioned enthusiasm from which their delegates in the national assembly had so lavishly surrendered their rights of tythe, without their concurrence, very generally condemned a bounty that bestowed what did not belong to the donors. They were greatly enraged and grieved at the confiscation of their property, and could not think highly of a new system of government, the first specimens of whose character were irreligion and robbery. Resistance, however, they saw would be vain; and they were therefore compelled to acquiesce in the humiliating and plundering decrees. But the pecuniary pressure, the proximate cause of the present crisis, still continued. The peasants considered taxes as an infringement upon liberty, and refused payment; others followed their example, and there was no money to support government, or carry on the public business. After stating the national wants, Mr. Neckar asked for a loan of thirty millions of livres, but the subscription was not filled. A scheme for voluntary contributions was adopted, and from its novelty eagerly embraced by this volatile people. All ranks vied in bringing their silver and gold to the public treasury, nor was coin only produced, but also plate, and the minutest articles of dress. The members of the assembly themselves, in their bountiful patriotism, agreed to sacrifice their shoe buckles to the exigencies of the community.

The law and policy of the kingdom are overturned.

Scheme of voluntary contributions.

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1789. Gold and silver utensils carried to the mint.

The king and queen sent their gold and silver plate to the mint for coinage. These offerings, however, were very inadequate to the supply of the public wants. A scheme was proposed by Mr. Neckar, and after many strong objections and remonstrances, embraced by the national assembly, for applying one FOURTH of every man's annual income to the wants of the state.[p]

Preparations for the new constitution.

HAVING made these very momentous changes respecting corporate and private property, they proceeded now to new model their constitution, according to the declaration of rights. The assembly was divided into sections and committees;[q] to each of which was assigned a specific part of the new polity, to be prepared, and grooved with the rest. The first question considered respecting the constitution was of the very highest importance; what share of authority the king should possess in the new legislature? On the solution of this problem it was to depend whether the royal power should be strong enough to restrain the violence of democracy. On the one hand, it was proposed that the king should possess a veto, or negative, in the passing of a law; on the other, that he should be merely the chief executorial magistrate, without any voice in the legislation. For the negative voice were ranged, not only all the friends of the ancient monarchy, but the majority of the nobility and clergy; now sensible that they had conceded too much; apprehensive that their total ruin was intended, and desirous in the kingly prerogative to preserve a bulwark which might afford some defence to the remaining rights, to resist the torrent of democracy. Against it was opposed the whole body of the commons, who containing many subordinate divisions, agreed in the general desire of reducing the monarchy. The question was agitated with great force and violence on both sides. The opposition of the privileged orders was represented by demagogues to a rise from an intention of attempting a counter revolution; and the people were transported into fury and alarm. Lewis himself, ever desirous of accommodating differences, satisfying all parties, and maintaining tranquillity, made a proposal of a

Authority to be possessed by the king.

p Annual Register, 1790, chap. ii. q Bertrand, vol. i. chap. xiii.

compromise, by which he should have a power of suspending a law during two legislatures; but that if the third assembly persisted in its support, he should be obliged to give it his sanction. This proposal proving satisfactory to both parties, a decree passed, conferring these prerogatives on the king, under the denomination of *a suspensive veto*.[r] Another question was now discussed, also of very great importance. Whether the national assembly should be composed of one or of two chambers. Lally Tollendal, Clermont, Mounier, and other leaders of the moderate reformers, were equally zealous with the republicans for the establishment of a free government; but, considering a limited monarchy as affording the fairest prospect of beneficial and permanent liberty, they ardently recommended a senate, and a house of representatives, which should control the proceedings of each other, agreeably to the principle, and nearly after the model of the British constitution. From the narrow and interested impolicy of many of the nobles and clergy, who vainly hoped for the reestablishment of the three chambers, together with the predominance of the republicans, this proposal was entirely overruled. The commons reprobated every species of mixed government, and steadily abstaining from imitation of England, proposed, and carried, that the duration of the French legislative assembly should be only two years. Notwithstanding the rage for innovation, they confirmed the hereditary succession of the crown according to the Salic law. The friends of the duke of Orleans eagerly contended that the assembly, by confirming the renunciation of the first Bourbon king of Spain,[s] should render their patron next heir after the king, his son, and brothers. But the assembly, however violent and precipitate in what concerned France only, cautiously refrained from giving umbrage to other powers; and avoided the discussion. Meanwhile the furious republicans, both in the clubs and the national assembly, resolved that the residence of the royal family, and the legislature, should be changed from Versailles to the capital, where they would be still more completely under the control of

Suspensive veto.

Question if the assembly was to be composed of one or two chambers.

Carried that there should be only one. The commons reprobate the example of Britain. Settlement of the succession.

r Bertrand, vol. ii. chap. xiv. s Bertrand, vol. ii. chap. xiv.

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Ferocity of the people,

democratic direction. The court, and especially the queen, conceived the greatest horror at the idea of a compulsory abode, among so tumultuous, bloody, and ferocious a people. A transaction which took place in the beginning of October, accelerated the removal of the king and his family to a scene which they had so much reason to dread.

inflamed by scarcity.

Among other causes of popular violence, famine still raged throughout France, but particularly in Paris and Versailles. To repress the tumults additional troops were ordered to march to the royal habitation. The king himself was still allowed to have about his person a regiment of his own lifeguards; and the newly arrived corps was the regiment of Flanders. The gentlemen of the stationary forces, on the arrival of the strangers, according to the established custom of military hospitality, gave their brother officers an entertainment. In the course of their festivity, when both hosts and guests were heated by wine, the king and queen, with the infant dauphin, visited the banquetting room. The royal mother carried the infant prince completely round the table. Meanwhile the music played an air[t] which the ladies of the court accompained with the appropriate stanzas pathetically describing the feelings and sufferings of a captive king.[u] The power of music and the charms of beauty, combining with inherent loyalty, inspired the company with an enthusiasm which wine drove beyond all bounds of caution. Drawing their swords, they drank copious bumpers to the august health of their illustrious visitors and their family, successively,[x] while the chief personages, having expressed their warmest gratitude, retired. In such a disposition of mind, no moderation could be expect-

Additional troops arrive at Versailles.

Entertainment given by the officers in the palace to the new comers.

The royal family visit the banquetting room.

The queen presents the infant dauphin to the officers.

Music describes the sufferings of a captive king.

Effects of beauty, music, and wine.

t Bertrand, vol. ii. chap. xiv. u Taken from a dramatic work founded on the story of Richard Cœur de Lion's captivity when returning from the Holy Land, and beginning, "O Richard, O mon Roi."

x Bertrand, who gives a very particular account of this entertainment, mentions the following circumstance, which I do not recollect to have seen in any other publication. "I have (he says) been assured by two persons who were present at this entertainment, that the words *to the health of the nation* were also pronounced feebly by one of the guests, or one of the spectators, and that the not repeating or seconding this toast, was attended with no consequences. The custom of drinking to the health of the nation had not been then established, and one may be allowed, without a crime, to think that was not the moment for introducing such an innovation; yet one of the greatest crimes imputed to the *gardes-du-corps*, was their not being willing to drink to the health of the nation, that is to say, to their own health, for they were indisputably a part of the nation."

ed. A scene of complete intoxication ensued, and exhibited without disguise, and with augmented fervour, the sentiments with which it commenced. All the extravagance followed which wine could produce on romantic fancies and impassioned hearts. The national cockades were by the officers of Flanders torn from their hats, and trampled under foot;[y] and in their place were substituted old royal cockades, supplied by the ladies of the court, who took white ribbands from their own head dresses, to decorate the loyal officers, while the three coloured cockade was treated with contempt and scorn. This banquet was really no more than an excess of conviviality, at a season when prudence would have dictated reserve; but being exaggerated by all the circumstances which malicious invention could devise, filled Paris with the most violent rage. The innovating leaders pretended that the conduct of the officers and courtiers arose from counter revolutionary projects, with exulting joy from the confident expectations of success: a conspiracy, they affirmed, was matured for the restoration of despotism, and that the queen was at its head. The carousal of the royalists, at the time that the people wanted bread, was a flagrant insult to the nation. These sentiments were disseminated by the various classes and factions that were friendly to innovation; but were spread with peculiar activity by the adherents of the duke of Orleans.

The officers trample the national cockade.

Report of the entertainment at Paris. Rage and indignation of the revolutionists.

Lewis Philip Bourbon, duke of Orleans, was the descendant and representative of the only brother of Lewis XIV., and after the posterity of that monarch, next heir to the throne of France. In such an elevated rank, with riches far beyond the measure of any other European subject, he had devoted his youth to the most profligate debauchery: his vices, by their coarseness, excited the indignant contempt of a gentleman almost as much as the enormity of his crimes called on him the detestation of every virtuous man. His wealth affording him the means of very extensive depravity, enabled him to corrupt great numbers of the youth, and even to make considerable advances in vitiating the metropolis; and his

Character and projects of the duke of Orleans.

[y] Annual Register, 1789.

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habitation at the Palais Royal, far exceeded any other part of the French capital in variety, extent, and flagrancy of wickedness. Such was the mode of life by which this prince was distinguished by the time he had reached his fortieth year. His reputation, however, did not rest solely on uniform and habitual debauchery: other species of turpitude concurred in rendering him at once flagitious and execrable. Opulent as Orleans was, he was boundless in avarice. The duc de Penthiévre, high admiral of France, was one of the wealthiest noblemen of his country. Orleans cast his eyes on the daughter of this minister, but the son Lamballe intervened: with this youth he cultivated a close intimacy, and according to the concurrent accounts of various writers,[z] was the means of shortening the brother's life, after which he married the sister, now heir of her father's possessions. He moreover proposed to secure the reversion of Penthiévre's very lucrative post. With this view he entered the navy, and the first time he saw an enemy, a descendant of Henry IV. betrayed the despicable degeneracy of personal cowardice.[a] Such an exhibition effectually destroyed all his pretensions to naval promotion; and he conceived the blackest vengeance against the royal family, because the king would not intrust the supreme direction of his navy to a person who was afraid to fight: various circumstances also rendered the queen the peculiar object of his hatred. The commencing discontents in France opened to him prospects not only of revenge, but ambition: he hoped by fomenting disaffection to pave the way for the overthrow of the royal family, and his own advancement to the regency, if not to the throne. Weak as well as wicked, in seeking the downfal of the reigning sovereign, he promoted and headed attacks upon the monarchical authority; and what he sought by villany, by folly laboured to impair. He did not reflect that the doctrines which he promoted tended to overturn the crown which he pursued. He was so infatuated as to suppose that the bold and able leaders of a revolution which annihilated all adventitious distinctions,

z See Playfair on jacobinism.—Adolphus's Memoirs.—Picture of Paris, &c.

a In D'Orvillier's running fight with admiral Keppel. See this History, vol. ii. p. 215.

would labour to exalt a person, who, destitute of genius and of courage, had none but adventitious distinctions to boast. Since the subversion of the old government, he had abetted the most violent and licentious proceedings of the revolutionary mobs. Sagacious agitators at once saw his designs, and their futility, and professing to be his agents, used him as their dupe. The most eminent of his declared partisans at this time was Mirabeau, who at certain periods appears to have desired the promotion of Orleans to be regent of the kingdom, in the expectation of being the supreme director himself. Mirabeau very actively promoted the rage of the Parisians: he and his agents pretended to impute the scarcity to the machinations of the aristocrats, and the absence of the royal family, and encouraged the popular cry for the removal of the king to Paris. He promoted the belief of a conspiracy by the queen, and even intimated an intention of impeaching her majesty,[b] as a conspirator for destroying the freedom of the people, and keeping bread from the Parisians. These topics being repeated in the capital, the malignity of the Orleans faction, revolutionary enthusiasm, and popular licentiousness, concurred with the scarcity in producing a determination to hasten to Versailles to demand of the king bread, punishment of the aristocrats, and especially the guards. A multitude of the lowest woman undertook this expedition; these amazons broke open the town house, seized the arms there deposited, and meeting on the stairs a priest, required no farther proofs of his guilt than his dress; and commenced their orgies by hanging him to a lamp post. With the yell of infuriate savages they set out for Versailles, joined by Maillard, a creature of Orleans, and a favourite spokesman in the Palais Royal, with a few of his associates. They proceeded on their march: and meeting two travellers in the dress of gentlemen, they concluded them to be aristocrats, and hanged them without further inquiry. Arriving at Versailles, they sent Maillard to the national assembly, to demand the immediate punishment of the aristocrats and the lifeguards. The assembly sent their own presi-

The mob determines to bring the king to Paris.

Movement of the women for that purpose.

They hang priests and aristocrats.

Expedition to Versailles.

[b] Bertrand, vol. ii. chap. xvii.

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dent with a deputation of the women to wait upon the king. The deputies being thus employed, their constituents set about drinking—an operation for which their hasty departure in the morning had not allowed them time, and the road had not afforded materials. In half an hour the greater number of them were completely intoxicated. Thus prepared they broke into the national assembly, not only filled the galleries, but took their seats among the lawgivers, overwhelmed them with the grossest and loudest obscenity and imprecations. At last two of them, observing the president's chair to be empty, took possession of it themselves, and dictated the subjects of discussion. Such, even then, was French liberty; such were the assessors who controled the deliberations of men assembled on the most momentous business that could occupy legislators. While the female army was thus employed at Versailles, the fermentation at Paris rose to an extraordinary pitch and all classes of the populace burned with anxiety to know the result of the expedition. The national guards became so impatient, that they compelled their officers to lead them to Versailles, and declared their resolution to join in obliging the king to repair to Paris. La Fayette, the commander, though a friend to the new constitution, was favourably disposed to the person of Lewis,[c] as well as to the authority[d] which the new system had conferred on the sovereign, and was the adversary of violent republicans on the one hand, and of the Orleans faction on the other. He endeavoured to dissuade his soldiers from this expedition but found that the attempt would be impracticable; he therefore tried to moderate its operation. As the guards made no scruple of publicly proclaiming their opinions and sentiments on national affairs, La Fayette and his officers easily discovered whence their present thoughts and intentions originated. The grenadiers informed the general, without reserve, they understood the king to be an ideot, therefore they (the grenadiers) would not hesitate to declare, that matters must go on much better by the appointment of a regent. As this was the peculiar language and doctrine of Mirabeau and

The women overawe the legislature, break into the assembly, and take the president's chair.

c Bertrand, chap. xvi. d Bouille's Memoirs.

other directors of the Orleans faction, there could be little doubt where either the politics or the march of the guards originated.[e] Many of the soldiers also declared an intention of massacring the queen. The Parisian guards arrived at Versailles late in the evening, and were most cordially received by the national guards at Versailles, the mob of the same place, and the amazons of Maillard.[f] The most ferocious of the guards and other mobs in the morning surrounded the palace, and, with dreadful howlings, denounced the murder of the queen; and the palace was filled with consternation. But Marie Antoniette was not frightened. Amid crimes, (says Bertrand), alarms, confusion, and general stupor, the queen majestically displayed the sublimest and most heroic character. Her constant serenity, her countenance firm, and ever full of dignity, transfused her own courage into the soul of all who approached her. On that day she received a great deal of company. To some who expressed uneasiness she replied, "I know they are come from Paris to demand my "head; but I learned of my mother not to fear death, and "I will wait for it with firmness." Her answer to the advice given to her, to fly from the dangers that threatened her, does not less deserve to be recorded.—"No, "no," said she; "never will I desert the king and my chil- "dren: I will share whatever fate awaits them." Some hours of sleep happily came to repair her exhausted strength, and to enable her to encounter on the next day, with equal magnanimity, dangers still more horrid. About half past five in the morning, the repose of the princess received a frightful disturbance. An immense crowd endeavoured to break down the palace gate, and after murdering two of the life guards, effected their purpose. Dreadful howlings announced their entrance into the palace: they soon arrived at the foot of the great staircase, and ran up in crowds, uttering imprecations and the most sanguinary threats against the queen.[g] Before six they forced their way to the apartments of the royal con-

The mob assault the palace;

e Annual Register 1795, page 48. f Bertrand informs us, that this man was rather turbulent than malignant, and even tried to preserve some degree of moderation among his troop; which was certainly, in their present condition, no easy task. g Bertrand, vol. ii. 112.

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sort. The sentinel monsieur de Miomandre, perceiving the ruffians, called out, "Save the queen; her life is sought: "I stand alone against two thousand tigers." Her majesty escaped by a private passage into the king's apartment. Lewis, flying to her relief, was met by his own guards, who escorted him back to his apartments, where he found his queen and children arrived. The ruffians now endeavoured to force the antichamber, which a body of loyal guards defended with heroic courage; but their number was decreasing under the murdering hands of the banditti. The assassins had almost entered the apartment when the persuasions and supplications of Fayette and his officers induced them to desist. Meanwhile, the furious mob in the outer court demanded the appearance of the king and queen: the royal pair was persuaded to present themselves on the balcony. An universal cry arose, To Paris, to Paris. Refusal or remonstrance would have been instant death: the king's assent was immediately notified, and the furious rage converted into the most tumultuous joy. Within an hour began the procession, more melancholy and humiliating to the king and queen than any which history records of captive princes exhibited as spectacles to triumphant enemies. The sovereign of a mighty and splendid monarchy; so long and so recently famed for learning, arts, sciences, and civilization: renowned for the generosity, honour, and valour of its nobility; the courage and discipline of its numerous and formidable armies; their zealous and enthusiastic affection for their king and his family; the ardent loyalty of the whole people; was now, without foreign invasion or war; without any avowed competitor for his throne; even without any acknowledged rebellion of his subjects, with his queen and family, dragged from his palace, and led in triumph by the offscourings of his metropolis, the lowest and most despicable of ruffians, the meanest and most abandoned trulls.

attempt to murder the queen; prevented by the heroism of her defenders.

The king and queen agree at depart for Paris.

Mournful procession of a degraded monarch.

Further proceedings at Paris.

FROM the 6th of October 1789, the king is to be considered as a prisoner at Paris. Mounier, equally the friend of liberty and of monarchy, from these horrid transactions augured the downfal of both. He and other penetrating observers saw that the outrages were not the mere accidental ebullitions of a temporary and local fren-

zy, but the effects of a general cause. He, Lally Tollendal, and others of the moderate party, who had been the vigorous and ardent advocates of a limited monarchy, now seeing their efforts unavailing, seceded from the assembly. But the just and virtuous Mounier, before his retirement, established an inquiry into the recent massacres. The national assembly followed the king to Paris. The republican party now began to express suspicions of the duke of Orleans, which they had before entertained; though finding him and his creatures instrumental to their designs, they had made use of his agency as long as it was wanted. Become now so powerful, they thought proper to drop the mask, and intimated to him through Fayette, that his presence in France was incompatible with the public good: he was accordingly compelled to retire into England. At this time the Parisian mob promulgated its resolution to take the administration of justice into its own hands; and accordingly hanged[h] several aristocrats (especially bakers) at the lamp post. The assembly, from regard to its own safety, resolved to prevent so summary proceedings. They passed a very effective decree, by which the municipal magistrates were obliged to proclaim martial law whenever the mob proceeded to outrage. They instituted a criminal inquiry into the late murders; several ringleaders were hanged, and terror thus was struck into the rest. Some degree of tranquillity was established in the metropolis; and the assembly proceeded with less interruption and greater security in its schemes of legislation.

The existing government endeavours to quell the mob. Severe prosecutions for that purpose.

Such were the leading features and principal acts of the French revolution in 1789. Britons rejoiced at the overthrow of the old French government because so contrary to the liberty which they themselves enjoyed. A change from such a system they concluded must certainly be an improvement. They trusted that the alterations in France would generate a government similar to the British constitution. Presuming beneficial effects from the French revolution, the greatest part of the people rejoiced at this event. The generous feelings of Englishmen sym-

Effects of the Frenoh revolution in Britain.

h Annual Register, 1790.

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Detesting the old government, and not acquainted with the new, Britons approve the change as friendly to liberty.

Sentiments of various classes.

pathised with the assertors of liberty, before they had time and opportunity to ascertain its effects on the situation and characters of its new votaries. Men whose classical erudition had a greater influence in forming their opinions than experience and reason; who judged of political wisdom more from the practice of the ancient republics than from history, investigation of character, and circumstances, admired what they conceived to be approaches to the democratic institutions of Greece and Rome. Scholars, chiefly eminent for philology, were, with very few exceptions, admirers of a system[i] that they supposed similar to those which they found delineated and praised in their favourite languages. Literary men of a higher class than mere linguists; persons of profound metaphysical and moral philosophy, but of more genius and speculative learning than conversancy with practical affairs, commended the lawgivers of France for taking for their guide the "po-"larity of reason, instead of following the narrow and "dastardly[k] coastings of usage, precedent, and authori-"ty." There were many who, forming their ideas of civil and political liberty from their own abstractions more than from experience, admired the French for declaring the equality of mankind, and making that principle the basis of government, instead of modifying it according to expediency. This latter class comprehended the greater number of eminent projectors of civil and ecclesiastical reform, who long had considered even Britain herself deficient in the liberty which their fancies represented as deducible from the rights of man. Various political societies had been constituted for different purposes of reform, but of late years the most active of them had manifested principles too abstract and visionary[l] to be practicably consistent with the British constitution, or indeed any form of government founded upon an opinion that human nature is imperfect, and requires controls proportioned to the prevalence of passion. These societies[m]

i The instances are numerous, as the observing reader can easily recollect without particularization.

k See Vindiciæ Gallicæ.

l See Price's Discourse of the love of our country, November, 4, 1789, in Priestley, passim; also, Writings of their votaries, passim.

m Revolution Club and Society for Constitutional Information.

praised the French revolutionists, and recommended their example as a glorious pattern for the human race. They sent congratulations to the French leaders. A regular official correspondence was carried on between the members of private clubs in England, and the leaders of the republican revolution in France. Statesmen of high rank, and of the highest talents,[n] venerating liberty in general, presumed French liberty would render its votaries happy; and imputing the aggressions of France on this and other nations to the corrupt ambition of her court, anticipated tranquillity from her renovated state, and rejoiced at a change that appeared to them to forebode peace to Britain and to Europe. These admirers of the French revolution were stimulated by British patriotism as well as love of freedom. The excesses they saw and lamented, but tracing them to their source, they imputed them to enthusiasm; which, reasoning from experience, they trusted, though furiously violent in its operation on such characters, would gradually subside, and leave only the ardour of useful reform and improvement. The ablest men on the side of administration, abstained from delivering any opinion concerning the internal proceedings of a foreign state which had not then interfered with ours. At the end of 1789, by far the greater number of all classes and parties in Britain was friendly to the French revolution; and its favourers included a very great portion of genius and learning, while none was hitherto exerted by our countrymen on the opposite side. Such was the impression which this extraordinary change of Gallic polity produced in the most liberal and enlightened of neighbouring nations.

n See Speeches of messrs. Fox and Sheridan in session 1790.

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Meeting of parliament.—At the beginning of the session little debate or discussion.—Mr. Fox takes an opportunity of praising the French revolution—commends the conduct of the French army in supporting the cause of the people against an arbitrary court—likens them to the English army supporting the prince of Orange—deems the French revolution in many respects, similar to the deliverance of England.—His friend and political associate Mr. Burke, manifests a different opinion—unfolds his view of the French revolution—considers its principles, and the characters on which they are operating—points out its first effects, and deduces the outrageous excesses from its nature and doctrines—deprecates the French system as a model for England—denies the allegations of similarity between the French and British revolution—praises the excellence of the British constitution, as contrasted with the French system.—Mr. Sheridan concurs in Mr. Fox's praises of the French revolution.—Mr. Pitt, praising the British constitution, delivers no opinion on the French system.—Dissenters again propose to seek the repeal of the test act.—Circumstances apparently favourable to the hopes of the dissenters—they are strenuously opposed by the members of the church.—Work entitled, Review of the case of the Protestant dissenters.—Dissenters trust their cause to the transcendent talents of Mr. Fox—his view of the subject, and answers to objections.—Mr. Pitt continues to treat admissibility to offices as a mere question of expediency—deems the leaders of the dissenters inimical to our establishment—adduces from the conduct of the dissenters, and the situation of political affairs, arguments against the repeal.—Mr. Burke speaks on the same side.—Majority against the propo sed repeal.—Mr. Flood proposes a plan for a parliamentary reform—his subtle theory is controverted by Mr.

Windham—withdraws his motion.—Petitions from manufacturers of tobacco, praying to repeal the law subjecting them to excise.—A motion to that effect by Mr. Sheridan—is negatived.—Financial statements.—Prosperous situation of the country.—Mr. Dundas presents an account of our East India possessions.—Libels against the commons on account of the management of Hastings's trial—censured.—Dispute with Spain.—Nootka Sound.—Insult offered by Spain—satisfaction demanded.—Conduct of Spain.—King's message to parliament.—Parliament unanimously pledge their support of the king in vindicating the rights of Britain.—Dissolution of parliament.—Warlike preparations.—Diplomatic discussion between Britain and Spain.—Spain attempts to interest France.—The French nation is inimical to war with England.—Spain, hopeless of aid, yields to the demands of Britain.—The disputes are adjusted in a convention.

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1790. Meeting of parliament.

THE British parliament had sitten so late in the preceding year, that it did not meet till the 21st of January 1790. In the opening speech, his majesty mentioned the continuance of the war in the North and East of Europe, and informed the house that the internal situation of different parts of the continent engaged his majesty's most serious attention. Concerned as he was at the interruption of tranquillity, he was persuaded his parliament would join him in entertaining a deep and grateful sense of the favour of providence, which continued to his subjects the increasing advantages of peace, and the uninterrupted enjoyment of those invaluable blessings which they had so long derived from our excellent constitution. His majesty informed them, that during the recess of parliament he had been under the necessity of adopting measures for preventing the exportation, and facilitating the importation, of corn. The addresses were voted without opposition or debate; an act of indemnity was proposed, and unanimously carried, respecting the order of council about grain.

DURING the first weeks of the session, there was scarcely any parliamentary discussion, but afterwards some of the most striking efforts of eloquence arose from

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At the beginning of the session there is little debate or discussion.

Mr. Fox takes an opportunity of praising the French revolution;

a subject which was not properly before the house. Such a momentous event as the French revolution, interesting all enlightened men, had very early engaged the ardent mind of Mr. Fox. This illustrious senator venerated and admired liberty; and contemplating the Gallic change, estimated its nature and value by the happiness which, he conceived, from overturning an arbitrary government, it would bestow upon many millions. He spoke with transport and exultation of a great people breaking their chains on the heads of their oppressors, and celebrated the particular acts, both civil and military, that had been most instrumental in effecting the change. As a man he rejoiced in the subversion of despotism, and as a Briton, in a state from which he foreboded tranquillity to this country. When the army estimates were under consideration,[o] this distinguished orator first promulgated to parliament his opinions concerning the French revolution. The military establishments proposed were nearly the same as in the former year. Messrs. Pitt and Grenville contended, that though there was no reason to apprehend hostilities from any foreign power, yet the unsettled state of Europe, and the internal situation of several parts of it made it necessary for us to keep ourselves in such a condition as might enable us to act with vigour and effect if occasion should require our exertions. It was (they argued) a preposterous economy to tempt an attack by our weakness, and for a miserable present saving to hazard a great future expense. Our foreign alliances had been approved by all parties, as necessary for the preservation of that balance of power in Europe upon which the permanence of its tranquillity depended; but they could only be rendered effectual for their purpose by our ability to support them with an adequate force. Mr. Fox argued that our ancient rival and enemy, by her internal disturbances, probably would be disabled from offering us any molestation for a long course of years; and the new form that the government of France was likely to assume would make her a better neighbour, and less propense to hostility, than when she was subject to the cabal and in-

[o] February 9th, 1790. See parliamentary reports.

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trigues of ambitious and interested statesmen.[p] He applauded the conduct of the French soldiers during the late commotions: by refusing to obey the dictates of the court, that army had set a glorious example to all the military bodies of Europe, and had shown, that men, by becoming soldiers, did not cease to be citizens. Their conduct (he said) resembled the behaviour of the patriotic soldiers of England when the prince of Orange landed to assist in preserving our civil and religious liberties: the French revolution, indeed, in many respects was like to the glorious event which established and secured the liberties of England.

commends the conduct of the French army in supporting the people against an arbitrary court. Likens them to the English army supporting the prince of Orange.

To these doctrines Mr. Fox found an opponent in a very eminent senator, with whom he had coincided during the greater part of his parliamentary life. Habituated to profound meditation on important questions in political philosophy, and thoroughly conversant with history, Mr. Burke had applied himself, with the most watchful attention, to observe the details, and to study the principles, of this extraordinary change. He had reprobated the old government of France; and although he thought it, in the reign of Lewis XVI. softened in its exercise by the progress of civilization, and the personal character of the monarch, still he deemed the welfare of the people to rest on an unstable basis, and to require very considerable reform before it could be a beneficial system. But esteeming arbitrary power a great evil, he knew that unwise efforts to shake it off might produce more terrible calamities. He venerated the spirit of liberty as, when well directed and regulated, a means of human happiness; his respect for it in every individual case, was proportionate to his opinion of its probable tendency to produce that end, where he had not actual experience to ascertain its effects. It was not merely the possession of it that constituted it

His friend and political associate, Mr. Burke manifests a different opinion.

p Mr. Fox's expectation of tranquillity to other states from the prevalence of freedom in France, even had there been nothing peculiar in the nature of that freedom, and the habits and dispositions of its votaries, seems to have arisen more from theory than from the actual review of the history of free countries. Had the comprehensive and full mind of this philosophical politician called before him his own extensive knowledge of the actions of mankind, he would have immediately perceived that free nations have been as propense to hostility as the subjects of an arbitrary prince. See the several histories of the ancient republics in the Greek, Latin, or modern languages: in our own tongue, Ferguson, Gillies, and Mitford.

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a blessing, but the enjoyment of it to such an extent, and with such regulations as could make it subsidiary to virtue and happiness. Its operation as a blessing or a curse, depended, he thought, on its intrinsic nature, compounded with the character of its subjects, and, in a certain degree, extrinsic causes; and he uniformly controverted[q] those doctrines of the rights of man which would allow the same freedom to all persons, and in all circumstances. Neither did he conceive, that every one state, though refined, was equally fit for the beneficial exercise of liberty as every other state, which was not more refined. The control, he thought, must be strong in the direct ratio of passion, as well as the inverse ratio of knowledge and reason. Having long viewed, with anxiety, the new philosophy become fashionable in France, he bestowed the most accurate attention on the designs of its votaries, as they gradually unfolded themselves. A sagacity, as penetrating as his views were comprehensive, discovered to him the nature of those principles which guided the revolutionists, as well as the characters on which they were operating. The notions of liberty that were cherished by the French philosophy he accounted speculative and visionary, and in no country reducible to salutary practice: he thought they proposed much less restraint than was necessary to govern any community, however small, consisting of men as they are known from experience; he conceived also that the volatile, impetuous, and violent character of the French, demanded in so great a nation much closer restraints than were requisite in many other states. From the same philosophy which generated their extravagant notions of freedom proceeded also infidelity. He had many years before[r] predicted that the joint operation of these causes, unless watchfully and steadily opposed, would overturn civil and religious establishments, and destroy all social order. The composition of the national assembly, the

unfolds his view of the French revolution: considers its principles, and the characters on which they were operating,

q See life of Burke, passim.

r This was the opinion which he had maintained of infidelity and speculative politics in general, in his vindication of natural society, and in his letter to the sheriffs of Bristol, and of French infidelity and speculative politics in particular, in his speech after returning from France in 1773;* and in all his speeches and writings, whenever the occasion required his admonition.

* Life of Burke, p. 161.

degradation of the nobility, the abolition of the orders, the confiscation of the property of the church, and many other acts, tended to confirm the opinion which he had formed. Much as he detested the outrages, he reprobated the principles more, and foresaw that in their unavoidable operation, they would lead to far greater enormities: in the spirit and details of the new constitution, he did not expect either happiness, or even permanent existence. The vicinity of France to England made him apprehensive least the speculations of that country should make their way into this, and produce attempts against a constitution founded on observation and experience, and not on visionary theories. The approbation manifested by many Britons, both of the doctrines and proceedings of the French revolutionists, increased his apprehension. When he found that his friend, of whose wisdom and genius he entertained so very exalted an opinion was among the admirers of the recent changes in France; he was anxious lest a statesman to whose authority so much weight was due, should be misunderstood to hold up the transactions in that country as a fit object of our imitation. Our patriotic ancestors had with cautious wisdom guarded against the contagion of French despotism, which had not only infected our sovereigns Charles and James, but also made some impression on many of their subjects. The danger in the last ages, he observed, was from an example of tyranny in government, and intolerance in religion. The disease was now altered, but far more likely to be infectious. Our present danger arose from atheism instead of bigotry, anarchy instead of arbitrary power. Through an admiration of men professing to be the votaries of liberty, those who did not thoroughly examine the real features of the French revolution, might be led to imitate the excesses of an irrational, unprincipled, proscribing, confiscating, plundering, ferocious, bloody and tyrannical democracy.[t] He severely reprobated the conduct of the army: the abstract proposition that soldiers ought not to forget they were citizens, he did not combat; but applied to any particular case, it depended en-

and deduces its outrageous excesses from its nature and doctrines.

He reprobates it as an example to England.

[t] See Parliamentary Debates, Feb, 9, 1790.

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tirely on the circumstances: in the recent conduct of the French guards, it was not an army embodied under the respectable patriot citizens of the state in resisting tyranny; it was the case of common soldiers deserting from their officers, to join a furious and licentious populace. The conduct of the British soldiery in 1688, was totally different from the conduct of the French soldiery in 1789. William of Orange, a prince of the blood royal of England, was called in by the flower of the English aristocracy to defend its ancient constitution, and not to level all distinctions. To this prince, so warmly invited, the aristocratic leaders who commanded the troops, went over with their several corps, as to the deliverer of their country; military obedience changed its object; but military discipline was not for a moment interrupted in its principle. After enumerating the constituents and acts of the French revolution, he contended that in almost every particular, and in the whole spirit of the transaction, that change differed from the alteration effected by Britain. "We," said Mr. Burke, "took solid securities: settled doubtful questions; and corrected anomalies in our law. In the stable fundamental parts of our constitution, we made no revolution; no, not any alteration at all; we did not weaken the monarchy; perhaps it might be shown that we strengthened it very considerably. The church was not impaired; the nation kept the same ranks, the same privileges, the same franchises, the same rules for property. The church and state were the same after the revolution that they were before, but better secured in every part."

He controverts the allegation of similarity between the French and British revolutions, and praises the British constitution as contrasted with the French system.

MR. SHERIDAN declared that he entirely disagreed from Mr. Burke concerning the French revolution, and expressed his surprise that a senator whose general principles had been uniformly so friendly to liberty, and to the British constitution, could declare or feel an indignant and unqualified detestation of all the acts of the patriotic party in France. He conceived theirs to be as just a revolution as ours; proceeding upon as sound a principle, and a greater provocation. Abhorring their excesses, he imputed them to the depravity of the old government, the sentiments and characters which despotism formed. He him-

Mr. Sheridan concurs in Mr. Fox's views of the French revolution.

self regarded the French revolution as a glorious struggle for liberty, and wished its supporters the fullest success. Concerning the British revolution, he no less differed from Mr. Burke. That event was founded on the same principle with the French change; regard for the rights of man. It overturned tyranny, gave real efficient freedom to this country, which he would wish to see diffused throughout the world.[w] Mr. Pitt testified his high approbation of the principles laid down concerning our excellent constitution: for these he declared this country to the latest posterity ought gratefully to revere the name of Mr. Burke. With that caution which, advancing all that was necessary, abstained from declarations not required by the occasion, Mr. Pitt confined his applause to that part of Mr. Burke's speech which referred to the constitution of Britain. That was a subject of discussion that could never be foreign to a British parliament: concerning the French revolution, as affecting, or likely to affect France itself, he delivered no opinion.

Mr. Pitt, praising the British constitution, delivers no opinion on the French system.

Colonel Phipps and sir George Howard, as military men, strongly objected to the panegyric pronounced by Mr. Fox, on the French guards, as a model of military conduct, and contrasted their desertion of their master, and junction with rioters, with the behaviour of the British troops, during the disturbances of 1780. Our soldiers did not, in violation of their oaths, and of their allegiance, join anarchy and rebellion, but feeling as citizens and soldiers, patiently submitted to the insults of the populace; in spite of provocation, maintained the laws, and acted under the constituted authorities of the realm.

The dissenters, encouraged by the smallness of the majority which had rejected Mr. Beaufoy's motion of the

w Mr. Sheridan's admiration of the French revolution appears to have arisen first from considering it as a triumph of liberty over despotism, in which estimate he had not paid an adequate attention to its peculiar nature and principles; and secondly, from an idea that in principle it resembled our revolution, though dissimilarity had been very clearly and strongly stated by Mr. Burke, and that statement, though not admitted, had not been overturned by Mr. Sheridan, or any of his supporters.* His ardent wish for the general diffusion of a liberty producing the greatest blessings to Britain, overlooked the diversities of national characters in different countries. From a partial consideration of the case, instead of an accurate and complete view of every circumstance, and its whole character, appeared to arise the prepossessions of many men of genius and patriotism in favour of the French revolution.

* See Parliamentary Debates, February, 1790.

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Dissenters again propose to seek the repeal of the test act.

former year, persevered in their application to parliament, and spared no efforts, either by general appeals to the public, or by canvassing particular members of the legislature; nor were grounds wanting to excite their sanguine hopes of success. The French revolution was favoured by a considerable number of Britons, who venerating the principles of liberty that were enjoyed by themselves, regarded with pleasure the supposed diffusion of freedom to their neighbours. This approbation of the Gallic system, in many was not without a tinge of their peculiar doctrines, and they began to think that the highest perfection of civil government, consisted in exemption from restraint. Hence great numbers totally unconnected with the dissenters, and before quite indifferent about their peculiar views and interests, became zealous advocates for the repeal of the test and corporation acts, as inimical to the rights of man lately promulgated in the neighbouring nation. On these visionary theories the claims of the dissenters were maintained in periodical publications,[y] which were employed in promoting their cause, and in other occasional works produced for their service. The leaders of the non conformists having declared their enmity to the national religion, found ready and willing auxiliaries among those who had no religion at all. The deists, encouraged by the aspect of affairs in France to hope for the speedy diffusion of infidelity, or as they phrased it, *light*, eagerly joined in a measure tending to weaken the great bulwark of national faith. From the time of the French revolution, we may date a coalition between the deists and the Socinian dissenters, which, in its political or religious effects, afterwards extended to many others. Republicans aware of the close connexion between the church and monarchy, most readily joined a class of men who were alleged to seek the downfal of our ecclesiastical establishment; a change, which they well knew, would tend to the overthrow of the monarch. Besides this new accession of strength, the circumstance of an approaching election appeared also favourable to the attempt of the dissenters, on account of their great weight and influence in many counties and

Circumstances apparently favourable to it.

y See Analytical Review, passim.

corporations, and their avowed determination to exert them on the ensuing occasion, in the support of such candidates only as were known, or should promise to be their supporters.[z] Farther to strengthen their cause, they proposed to consolidate with their own, the interests of the Roman catholic dissenters, and from the various constituents of their force, they had sanguine expectations of success.

They are strenuously opposed by members of the church. Work entitled *Review of the case of protestant dissenters.*

On the other hand, the friends of the church, though not so early in their preparations, were fully as vigorous when they did commence. Less numerous, but more forcible, literary efforts were made in defence of our ecclesiastical establishments. The case was argued from the probable tendency of dissent, from actual experience of the general conduct of dissenters, and from the present state of political affairs. On the first head it was observed, that ill will to the establishment[a] must in all governments belong to the character of the dissenter, if he be an honest man, however it may be softened by his natural good disposition, or restrained by political sagacity. A dissenter may occasionally support an establishment which he hates, if he foresee that its ruin would raise another from which his party would meet with less indulgence.[b] But a preference to his own sect is in itself a virtuous principle; every dissenter must be inclined to use any influence or authority with which an imprudent government may intrust him, to advance his sect in the popular esteem, and to increase its numbers. He will employ all means that appear to himself fair and justifiable, to undermine the church, if he hope that its fall may facilitate the establishment of his own party, or some other more congenial to his own. In all this, the crime is not in the man, but in the government intrusting him with a power, which he cannot but misuse. The man himself, all the while, supposes he is doing good, and his country service; and the

z This mode of proceeding is much blamed by eminent, but moderate members of their own body, whose opinion I have heard very lately in personal conversation.

a See *Review of the case of protestant dissenters*; a celebrated pamphlet imputed to Dr. Horsley.

b The dissenters often cited their fidelity to the house of Hanover, and enmity to the Stuarts. This remark was probably intended to account for their zeal.

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harm which he may effect under the notion of doing good, will be the greater in proportion to his abilities and virtues; on these undeniable principles the policy of a test is founded. To confirm arguments from probable tendency, appeals were made to facts; and the history of dissenters was traced from the first germs of puritanism to the present time. Under certain restrictions, they had been beneficial to the community, but without these restrictions they had been hurtful. This position was illustrated by views of their proceedings during the last century; from the attainment of partial advantage, to the overthrow of the church and monarchy, the destruction of rank, confiscation of property, cruel persecutions and massacres. The principles which had produced such enormities were now cherished and supported, and wanted only predominant power to give them effect. Dr. Priestley, followed by a numerous tribe of votaries, had published his enmity to the church; while Dr. Price had no less publicly proclaimed his enmity to monarchy. They and their disciples had, from the downfal of the orders in France, become more eager in their expectations, more confident in their boasts, and more incessant in their efforts. For these and other reasons founded on the same principles, the most eminent of the prelates, the body of the clergy, and the friends of the church, called to the people to assist them in defending the ecclesiastical establishment.

Dissenters entrust their cause to the transcendent talents of Mr. Fox.

The dissenters, to have an advocate of abilities proportioned to their conception of the importance of the question, intrusted the discussion of their cause to the brilliant and powerful talents of Mr. Fox; and on the 2d of March the orator brought the subject before the house of commons. Acquainted with the arguments employed by Dr. Horseley, and other champions of the church, he directed his reasoning chiefly to impugn their allegations, and pursued nearly the order of those whom he wished to confute. It was, he contended, unwarrantable to infer *a priori*, and contrary to the professions and declarations of the persons holding such opinions, that their doctrines would produce acts injurious to the common weal. Men ought not to be judged by their opinions, but by their actions. Speculative notions ought never to disqualify a

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man for executing an office, the performance of whose duties depends upon practical abilities, dispositions and habits. The object of the test laws at first had been to exclude anti-monarchical men from civil offices; but such conduct proceeded upon false pretences, it tended to hypocrisy, and served as a restraint on the good and conscientious only. Instead of a formal and direct oath of allegiance, they resorted by means of a religious test, to an indirect political standard. The danger of the church arose only from the supine negligence of the clergy, and the superior activity and zeal of the dissenters, in discharging the duties of their sacred functions. History exhibited the dissenters supporting the principles of the British constitution, while the high church promoted arbitrary power. When this country had been distracted with internal troubles and insurrections, the dissenters had with their lives and properties stood forward in its defence. Their exertions had powerfully contributed to defeat the rebellions in 1715 and 1745, to maintain the constitution, and establish the Brunswic family on the throne: in those times every high churchman was a jacobite, and as inimical to the family of Hanover, as the dissenters were earnest in their support. An attempt had recently been made, with too great success, to raise a high church party: the discipline of the church, and the abstract duties which she prescribed, he admired and revered, as she avoided all that was superstitious, and retained all that was essential: he therefore declared himself her warm friend. Individual members of the body he esteemed for their talents, learning and conduct; but as a political party, the church never acted but for mischief. Objections had been raised for the repeal, from the French revolution; but this great event was totally irrelevant, as an argument against the claims of the dissenters: it had, indeed, a contrary tendency; the French church was now paying the penalty of former intolerance. Though far from approving of the summary and indiscriminate forfeiture of church property, in that country, he could not but see that its cause was ecclesiastical oppression. This should operate as a warning to the church of England; persecution may prevail for a time; but ultimately terminates in the punish-

His view of the subject,

and answer to objections.

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ment of its abettors. He was aware that the cause which he had undertaken, was not at present popular; some of those whom he most highly valued differed from him upon this subject. So far was he individually from having any connexion with the dissenters, that in them he had experienced the most violent political adversaries; but regarding their cause as the cause of truth and liberty, he should give it his warmest support both on the present and every future occasion. He concluded with proposing a more specific motion for the revision of the test act, than any which was formerly made.

Mr. Pitt continues to treat admissibility to offices as a mere question of expediency,

Mr. Pitt, after arguing that eligibility to offices in any community, was a question not of right but expediency, considered the test act upon that ground. Presuming the utility of the ecclesiastical establishment to be generally granted, he inquired whether the principles of the dissenters did not aspire at the subversion of the church, and whether their conduct did not manifest an intention of carrying these principles into practice. Mr. Fox had proposed to judge men, not by their opinions, but by their actions. This was certainly the ground for procedure in judicial cases; but in deliberative, the policy of prevention was often not only wise but necessary; opinions produced actions, therefore provident lawgivers and statesmen must often investigate opinions, in order to infer probable conduct. Leading dissenters, from their principles inimical to the church, had indicated intentions immediately hostile; and favourite arguments in their works were the uselessness of an establishment, and the probability that by vigour and unanimity it might be overthrown. Against such avowed designs, it became all those who desired the preservation of the church, firmly to guard. Admissibility into offices of great trust would obviously increase the power of the dissenters; the assertions of their advocates, that their theological opinions had no influence on their political conduct, were most effectually confuted by their own declarations. At a general meeting they had subscribed resolutions recommending to voters to support, at the election, such members only as favoured the repeal. Thus while they themselves reprobated a religious test established by the constituted authorities of the kingdom,

and deems the leaders of the dissenters inimical to our establishment.

they wished to enforce a political test by their own sole authority. Perceiving their general principles practically operating in conduct hostile to the church, he should vote against a repeal, which in the present circumstances he deemed injurious to our establishment.

MR. BURKE, from various details and documents, endeavoured to prove, that the dissenters anxiously desired, and confidently expected, the abolition of tithes and the liturgy; and that they were bent on the subversion of the church.[c] The arguments recently and now employed in the writings and speeches of the friends of the church, the conduct of the dissenters, and the downfal of the French hierarchy, placed in the most striking light by Mr. Burke, added powerfully to the effect of Mr. Pitt's reasoning, and made a deep impression on members of parliament. In a meeting consisting of about four hundred, there was a majority of near three to one against the projected repeal.

The arguments against the application.

Great majority against the repeal.

THE spirit of change extended itself to our political constitution; two days after the rejection of Mr. Fox's motion, Mr. Flood proposed a reform in the representation of the people in parliament. This proposition, like the reasoning for the eligibility of dissenters, was grounded upon abstract theories concerning the rights of men. In a speech replete with metaphysical subtlety, he endeavoured to prove, that in the popular branch of our government, the constituent body was inadequate to the purpose of elections. Electoral franchises ought to be formed on principles both of property and number. Electors should be numerous, because numbers are necessary to the spirit of liberty; possessed of property, because property is conducive to the spirit of order. Pursuing these principles through various theoretical niceties, and applying them to the actual state of representation, he endeavoured to evince the necessity of a reform, which should extend electoral franchise to every householder. In answer to this theory, Mr. Windham argued from plain fact and experience, Mr. Flood had proved by an

Mr. Flood proposes a reform in parliament;

his subtle theory

c To establish these positions, he quoted passages from the resolutions at the public meetings; their catechisms; the writings of doctors Price and Priestley, and other supporters of the cause.

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arithmetical statement, what no one denied, that the representation was unequal, but he had not proved from political history and reasoning, that it was inadequate. Statesmen and lawgivers should argue from experience, and not from visionary theories; we had no *data* to ascertain the operation of such fanciful projects. Our representation as it stood, answered its purpose, as appeared in the welfare of the people, and the prosperity of the country. According to the present system, it was evident that the influence of the people was very extensive and powerful. It was their voice that sanctioning, permitted the most important acts of the executorial government; the commencement and continuance of war; the conclusion of peace, and the appointment of ministers were most frequently dictated by the people. Their weight was fully as great as expediency, their own security, and happiness admitted. Besides, were parliamentary reform generally desirable, the present era of speculation, change, and ferment, was totally unfit for the purpose. Messrs. Burke, Pitt, and others maintaining the same ground, and a great majority appearing inimical to Mr. Flood's plan, he withdrew his motion. These were the only great political questions which engaged the house of commons that season; and there they rested without extending to the peers.

is controverted by Mr. Windham.

He withdraws his motion.

Subjects of revenue occupied the chief attention of parliament, during the remainder of the session. Dealers in tobacco presented a great number of petitions, praying for the repeal of the act, which subjected that commodity to the excise. Mr. Sheridan took the lead in this subject, and, having in a splendid speech directed his eloquence against the whole system of excise laws, by the fertility of his genius, in his illustrations, he gave an appearance of novelty to so very trite a subject. He came at last to the peculiar hardships of the tobacco bill, enforced the objections made the preceding year, and proposed a resolution, that the survey of the excise is inapplicable to the manufactory of tobacco. It was contended by ministers, that the arguments against this application of excise, rested on the testimony of dealers, who had derived a great profit from fraudulent traffic, of which

Petitions from dealers in tobacco, praying to repeal the law subjecting them to the excise.

A motion to that effect by Mr. Sheridan

they were now deprived by the new mode of collection. It could be no just argument against a plan for the prevention of illicit trade, that it was not sanctioned by the approbation of contraband dealers. Was it unfair or illiberal to doubt the veracity and honour of a smuggler, when he gives testimony concerning his forbidden articles. The extent of former frauds was obvious in the productiveness of the late preventive means. Since its subjection to the excise, the revenue from tobacco had increased upwards of three hundred thousand pounds a year.[d] For these reasons, Mr. Sheridan's motion was negatived by a majority of a hundred and ninety-one to a hundred and forty-seven.

is negatived.

In the month of April, Mr. Pitt opened his scheme of finance for the year; having in general stated the prosperous situation of the country, to prove and illustrate his position, he recapitulated the extraordinary expenses, defrayed in 1789, in addition to the regular establishment. Notwithstanding these unforeseen demands, though we had borrowed only one million, we had paid six millions of debt. The increase of revenue, which had thus liquidated so many and great charges, originated in two permanent causes, the suppression of smuggling, and the increase of commerce.[e] Our navigation[f] had increased in proportion to our commerce. This prosperity arose

Financial statements.

Prosperity of the country.

d From the statement of the tobacconists, it appeared, that the manufacturers were about four hundred in number; eight millions of pounds were annually smuggled. The revenue which amounted to four hundred thousand pounds sterling; this sum purloining from the public they divided among themselves, so that each manufacturer on an average gained a thousand a year, by cheating the public.

e The exports for the year 1789, as valued by the customhouse entries, amounted to no less a sum than 18,513,000*l.* of which the British manufactured goods exported, amounted to 13,490,000*l.* Upon an average of the exports six years prior to the American war, which average he took on account of those years being the period in which our commerce flourished most, it appeared, that the British manufactured goods exported, amounted to no more than 10,343,000*l.* The imports for that year, amounted to a higher sum than was ever before known, being valued at 17,828,000*l.* This increase of import, which might at first appear disadvantageous, as it might seem to lessen the balance of trade in favour of the country, Mr. Pitt having traced to its real source, showed to arise from circumstances demonstrating the wealth and prosperity of the nation. It issued in remitted property from the East and West Indies, from the increased products of Ireland, showing the growing prosperity of the sister kingdom, from the Greenland and South Wales fisheries, being wealth poured in from the ocean.

f In the year 1773, there belonged to British ports, 9,224 vessels, and 63,000 seamen; and in the year 1785, 11,085 vessels, and 83,000 seamen, showing an increase of seamen in 1788, above the number in 1773, of no less than one-third.

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from the industry and enterprise, and capital, which are formed and protected under the British constitution. A system productive of so momentous benefits, it was our most sacred duty to defend against all innovations. Mr. Sheridan endeavoured, as in the preceding year, to controvert the minister's calculations, and through the same means, by including in a general average, the year 1786, that had been unproductive from causes peculiar to itself. The supplies for the army, navy, and ordnance, were nearly the same as in the former year: no new taxes were imposed; but there was a lottery as usual.

Mr. Dundas presents an account of our East India possessions.

MR. DUNDAS about the same time, presented an account of the financial state of India. The result of his statement was, that the revenue considerably exceeded the product of the former year;[g] and that the increase though, in some particulars, owing to temporary circumstances, was chiefly the effect of permanent causes. The system of justice and moderation adopted from the time that the territorial possessions were subjected to the control of the British government, had produced the most beneficial consequences both to the natives and to this country. The landed revenues being much more willingly paid, were much more easily collected. The friendly intercourse between the Hindoos and the British, had suggested various improvements in the collection. Fostered by a humane and equitable administration, the internal commerce of our India settlements had greatly increased. Observing rigid faith with the Indian natives, we had to encounter no formidable confederacies, which should at once diminish territorial improvement, and cause enormous expenses. Prosperity arising from a general scheme

g The revenues of Bengal amounted to - - - 5,619,999*l.*
---- of Madras - - - - - 1,213,229
---- of Bombay - - - - - 138,223

Charges of Bengal	3,185,250*l.*	6,971,456*l.*
of Madras	1,302,037	
of Bombay	568,710	5,053,997
	5,053,997*l.*	1,917,459*l.*

To this amount of the net revenue was to be added 230,361*l.* for exports; and the sum of 65,000*l.* charges for Bencoolen and the prince of Wales's Island; leaving on the whole, a net sum of 2,147,815*l.* applicable to the discharge of debts, and the purchase of investments.

of policy at once wise and liberal, must increase with accelerated rapidity. In a few years the company would be enabled to pay off their arrears:[h] British India would be more flourishing in wealth, in commerce, manufactures, and in every enjoyment, than any other part of the whole continent of Hindostan. In the present state of our power, we certainly had no danger to apprehend from any European nation. Holland was in alliance with us, and the French were not in a situation to disturb British India. We had still one enemy in the country, but without European auxiliaries, unsupported by the other native powers, Tippoo Saib could not be formidable to the British force. Mr. Francis endeavoured to controvert Mr. Dundas's allegations respecting both the territorial and commercial situation of affairs, and rested his objections chiefly upon extracts from letters. These Mr. Dundas insisted, being garbled, were partial and incomplete evidence; and resolutions formed on Mr. Dundas's statement, were proposed and adopted. The house voted several sums as a recompense for service, and an indemnification for losses sustained in the cause of the public. On a message from his majesty, parliament bestowed an annuity of a thousand pounds for twenty years, on Dr. Willis, who, under providence, had been so instrumental in restoring to the country so valuable a blessing.[i] The salary of the speaker was augmented from three thousand to six thousand a year. In a committee upon American claims, Mr. Pitt represented to the house the losses sustained by the family of Penn; their case was different from that of any of the other American loyalists, and therefore could not be governed by the rules which the house had established respecting the generality of cases. He proposed to grant to them and their heirs four thousand per annum out of the consolidated fund. Mr. Wilberforce moved for the consideration of the slave trade; most of the time allotted to that subject was occupied in hearing evidence, and no bill was introduced during this session.

h The debts of the company for the last year were 7,604,754*l.* those of the present year 6,501,385*l.* giving a decrease of 1,103,369*l.*

i See vol. iii, chap. xli.

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1790. Libels against the commons on account of Hastings' trial.

THE trial of Mr. Hastings made but little progress during the present session. The court sat but thirteen days, in which the managers of the house of commons went through the charge relative to the receipt of presents, which was opened by Mr. Anstruther, and summed up by Mr. Fox, in a speech which lasted two days. Mr. Burke detailed the circumstances which retarded the trial: the appointed mode of procedure had increased the difficulties and delays; the managers had proposed in the written evidence, to confine recital of letters and papers to such extracts as related to the charges; but the counsel for Mr. Hastings insisted on reading the whole of such documents, though many of them were extremely long; and the lords had agreed that no partial quotation from any paper could be received as evidence; that either the whole contents, or no part should be adduced; and the resolution evidently tending to promote impartial and complete inquiry, Mr. Burke complained of as an obstacle to the prosecution. It was however, he contended, the duty, of the house of commons, and their managers, to persevere in the trial, without regarding any hindrances which might occur. He moved two resolutions to that effect, and the motions were both carried. Mr. Hastings continued to have a most zealous and ardent advocate in major Scott, who very frequently employed not only his tongue but his pen in the cause. Scott had indeed a great propensity to literary exhibitions; and sundry letters to editors of newspapers, and several pamphlets, manifested his zeal as a pleader, and his fruitfulness as an author. Among his other effusions was a letter subscribed with his own name, in a newspaper called the Diary; this essay contained many injurious assertions against the managers, and also blamed the house of commons for supporting the impeachment. On the 17th of May, general Burgoyne complained of the letter as a gross libel. Major Scott avowed himself the author; but declared that he meant no offence to the house. If he had been guilty of an error, he had been misled by great examples; Messrs. Burke and Sheridan had published *stronger*[k] libels

k If either of these gentlemen published libels, few will controvert the major's opinion, that they must be *stronger* than any which he wrote.

than ever he had written. After offering this defence, Scott withdrew from the house; several motions of censure were made, and various modifications were offered. Mr. Burke was very urgent that an exemplary punishment should be inflicted; the conduct of Mr. Scott, he averred, had been extremely reprehensible: from the commencement of the prosecution he promoted libels against the managers, and their constituents.[l] After a long consideration it was agreed, that the letter should be voted a gross libel, and that the author should be censured in his place.

Dispute with Spain about Nootka Sound.

WHILE the nation flourished in the enjoyment of peace, an alarm arose that so beneficial a tranquillity would be speedily interrupted. On the 5th of May, Mr. Pitt delivered a message from his majesty to the commons, and the duke of Leeds to the peers; intimating an apprehension that the peace, during which Britain had so greatly prospered, might be broken. The following were the circumstances in which the message originated. During the last voyage of the celebrated Cook, the Resolution and Discovery having touched at Nootka (or Prince William's) Sound, the crews purchased a considerable number of valuable furs, which they afterwards disposed of to very great advantage in China; and captain King, who published the last volume of Cook's voyages, recommended the traffic with those northern coasts, as very lucrative. In consequence of this advice, some mercantile adventurers settled in the East Indies,[m] and having consulted sir John Macpherson the governor general, with his consent they undertook to supply the Chinese with furs from those regions, and also ginseng, an article that was likewise plentiful: for this purpose they fitted out two small vessels. The trade proved so advantageous, that in the year 1788 the adventurers determined to form a permanent settlement. With this view Mr. Mears, the gentleman principally concerned, purchased ground from

l Mr. Burke said, he was well assured, that not less than twenty thousand pounds had been expended in libels supporting Mr. Hastings; that major Scott was his agent in all these cases, and the common libeller of the house.

m The statement of the grounds of the dispute is compressed from the memorial of lieutenant Mears, presented to Mr. Secretary Grenville, which see in State Papers, 1790.

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the natives, and built a house which he secured and fortified, as a repository for his merchandise. The following year the settlement was enlarged; more land was bought from the country proprietors, and about seventy Chinese, with several artificers, constituted the establishment. In the month of May, two Spanish ships of war arrived in the Sound; for some days they made no hostile attempt, but on the fourteenth, one of the captains seized an English vessel, conveyed the officers and men on board the Spanish ships, and afterwards sent them prisoners to a Spanish port. He also took possession of the lands and buildings belonging to the new factory, removed the British flag, and declared that all the lands between cape Horn, and the sixtieth degree of north latitude, on the western coast of America, were the undoubted property of the Spanish king. Another vessel was captured afterwards under the same pretence; the crews of both were thrown into prison, and the cargoes were sold for the captors, without the form either of condemnation or judicature. The Spanish ambassador first informed the court of London that the ships had been seized; and at the same time expressed his master's desire, that means might be taken for preventing his Britannic majesty's subjects from frequenting those coasts, which he alleged to have been previously occupied by the subjects of the catholic king. He also complained of the fisheries carried on by the British subjects in the seas adjoining to the Spanish continent, as being contrary to the rights of the crown of Spain. His Britannic majesty immediately demanded adequate satisfaction to the individuals injured, and to the British nation for the insult which had been offered. The viceroy of Mexico had restored one of the vessels,[n] but had not thereby satisfied the nation; on the contrary, the court of Spain professed to give up the ships as a favour, not as a right, and asserted a direct claim to exclusive sovereignty, navigation, and commerce, in the territories, coasts, and seas in that part of the world. His

Insult offered by Spain.

Satisfaction demanded.

Conduct of Spain.

n The ship and crew (they said) had been released by the viceroy of Mexico, on the supposition, as he declared, that nothing but ignorance of the rights of Spain could have induced the merchants in question to attempt any establishment on that coast.

majesty, far from admitting this allegation, made a fresh demand for satisfaction, and having also received intelligence that considerable armaments were equipping in the ports of Spain, he judged it necessary to prepare on his side for acting with vigour and effect, in supporting the rights and interests of Britain. The message from the king stated the injury and insult, the satisfaction demanded, the reply, the second demand, the subsequent conduct of Spain, and the measures of Britain arising from that conduct: it farther recommended to his faithful commons, to enable him to make such augmentations to his forces as might be eventually necessary. His majesty earnestly wished that the wisdom and equity of the catholic king might render the satisfaction which was unquestionably due, and that this affair might so terminate as to prevent future misunderstanding, continue and confirm harmony and friendship between the two nations, which his majesty would ever endeavour to maintain and improve by all means consistent with the dignity of the crown, and essential interests of his subjects.[o]

The king's message to parliament.

The message being taken into consideration, Mr. Pitt declared, whatever the house must feel on the subject of his majesty's communication, he was too well assured of the public spirit of every member, to conceive that any difference of opinion could arise as to the measures which such circumstances would make it necessary to adopt. From the facts stated in the message, it appeared that British subjects had been forcibly interrupted in a traffic which they had carried on for years without molestation, in parts of America where they had an incontrovertible right of trading, and in places to which no country could claim an exclusive right of commerce and navigation. Ships had been seized, restitution and satisfaction demanded, but without effect: the court of Madrid had advanced a claim to the exclusive rights of navigation in those seas, that was unfounded, exorbitant, and indefinite: in its consequences aiming destruction at our valuable fisheries in the southern ocean, and tending to the annihilation of a commerce, which we were just beginning

o See State Papers, May 25, 1790.

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to carry on to the profit of the country, in hitherto unfrequented parts of the globe; it was therefore necessary and incumbent upon the nation to adopt measures which might in future prevent any such disputes. Much as we wished for peace, we must be prepared for war, if Spain continued to refuse satisfaction for the aggression, and to assert claims totally inconsistent with the rights of independent navigators, to lands which being before unappropriated, they should make their own by occupancy and labour. He therefore moved an address conformable to the message.

On a subject which involved both the interest and honour of the country, there was but one sentiment in both houses of parliament. No British senator could bear without indignant resentment, such an imperious assumption by any foreign power; and in the commons, the first to declare his cordial support was Mr Fox; he however blamed the minister for having so very lately afforded such a flattering prospect of the continuance of peace, when before that time he had known from the Spanish ambassador, the principal grounds of his majesty's message. It was replied that this animadversion was founded on a misapprehension of fact: at the period mentioned, government did not know the extent of the Spanish claims, nor the preparations that were carried on in the Spanish ports. An unanimous address was presented by parliament, assuring his majesty of their determination to afford him the most zealous and effectual support for maintaining the dignity of his crown, and the essential interests of his dominions.[p] This address was soon followed by a vote of credit of a million for the purpose of carrying into effect the warlike preparations that might be necessary. Motions were afterwards made in both houses, for papers that might illustrate the grounds of the dispute, but they were resisted upon an established rule, founded in wise policy, and sanctioned by uniform precedent, that no papers relating to a negotiation with a foreign power should be produced while such negotiation is pending.

Parliament unanimously pledge their support of the king in vindicating the rights of Britain.

p See State Papers, May 26, 1790.

On the 10th of June, his majesty closed the session with a speech, in which he acquainted the two houses that he had yet received no satisfactory answer from Madrid, and was therefore under the necessity of continuing to proceed with expedition and vigour in preparations for war, in the prosecution of which he had received the strongest assurances from his allies, of their determination to fulfil the engagements of the existing treaties. His majesty announced his intention of immediately dissolving the present parliament; and in signifying this determination, he thanked them for the proofs they had given of affectionate and unshaken loyalty to his person, their uniform and zealous regard for the true principles of our invaluable constitution, and their unremitting attention to the happiness and prosperity of the country. In a very concise, but comprehensive and strong summary, his majesty exhibited the effects of their exertions. "The rapid "increase (he said) of our manufactures, commerce, and "navigation, the additional protection and security afford-"ed to the distant possessions of the empire, the provisions "for the good government of India, the improvement of "the public revenue, and the establishment of a permanent "system for the gradual reduction of the national debt, "have furnished the best proofs of your resolution in "encountering the difficulties with which you had to con-"tend, and of your steadiness and perseverance in those "measures which were best adapted to promote the essen-"tial and lasting interests of my dominions." His majesty farther emphatically added, "The loyalty and public "spirit, the industry and enterprise of my subjects, have "seconded your exertions. On their sense of the advan-"tages which they at present experience, as well as on "their uniform and affectionate attachment to my person "and government, I rely for the continuance of that har-"mony and confidence, the happy effects of which have so "manifestly appeared during the present parliament, and "which must at all times afford the surest means of meet-"ing the exigencies of war, or of cultivating with increas-"ing benefit the blessings of peace." The parliament was dissolved the following day by proclamation.

Dissolution of parliament.

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1790. Warlike preparations.

THE preparations for maintaining our rights against aggression were carried on with vigour and expedition, proportioned to the resources of so potent a nation. But it being the intention of the British government to avoid hostilities, unless absolutely necessary for the national honour and security, Mr. Fitzherbert was sent to Madrid with full powers to settle the disputes between the Spanish and British nations, in a decisive manner.

Diplomatic discussion between Britain and Spain.

The grounds of the Spanish claims were set forth in a declaration to all the European courts, dated the 4th of June, 1790,[q] and more specifically detailed in a memorial delivered the 13th of June, to Mr. Fitzherbert, the British ambassador.[r] According to these statements, Spain had a prescriptive right to the exclusive navigation, commerce and property of Spanish America and the Spanish West Indies. The various treaties with England had recognised that right: in the treaty of Utrecht, which was still in force, Spain and England had agreed, that the navigation and commerce of the West Indies, under the dominion of Spain, should remain in the precise situation in which they stood in the reign of his catholic majesty Charles II. It was stipulated that Spain should never grant to any nation permission to trade with her American dominions, nor cede to any other power any part of these territories.[s] These rights extended to Nootka Sound; and though Spain had not planted colonies in every part of these dominions, still they were within the line of demarkation that had been always admitted. On the part of England it was answered,[t] that though the treaty of Utrecht, and subsequent conventions recognised the rights of Spain to her dominions in America, and in the West Indies, to be on the same footing as in the reign of Charles II. and we were still willing to adhere to that recognition, the admission by no means proved that Nootka Sound made part of those territories. By the plainest maxims of jurisprudence, whatever is

q State Papers, 1790.

r State Papers, 1790.

s The object of this stipulation was, to exclude France which was become so closely connected with Spain, from any share in her American trade or possessions.

t State Papers, 1790; Mr. Fitzherbert's answer to the Spanish memorial.

common belongs to the first occupier; but the right co-extensive with occupancy is by occupancy determined: every nation, like every individual, has a right to appropriate whatever they can acquire without trespassing on the previous appropriations of others. The English had a right to possess as much of the desert coast of America as they could occupy or cultivate. The Spaniards not having established their claims by either occupancy or labour, proved no right to the exclusive property of Nootka Sound. The seizure, therefore, of the British vessels and British effects, was an injury and an insult for which Britain demanded restitution and satisfaction. The language of British justice, demanding what British power could so easily enforce from any aggressor that dared to provoke its vengeance, was represented by Spain as haughty and menacing; and various difficulties occurred before matters were brought to a decision. The Spaniards professed a desire of conciliation, but were really endeavouring to interest the French government in their behalf; and the royal family of France was sufficiently disposed to support the Bourbon compact; but the king had now lost the power of giving effect to this agreement. The national assembly decreed an armament of fourteen ships of the line, but avowedly to protect their own commerce and colonies, and to embrace no measures that were not purely defensive; and this resolution highly gratified the people, who were not then disposed to go to war with England. Though the preparations of Spain were vigorous as far as her power and resources admitted, yet her fleets consisting of seventy ships of the line, manned by such sailors as she could collect, was little able to cope with the navy of England, amounting to one hundred and fifty-eight ships of the line, manned by British seamen. Finding no prospect of effectual assistance from France, and conscious of her own inability to contend with England, Spain began to mingle proffers of concession with her former declarations of pacific intention. Mr. Fitzherbert having persisted in his demands, without relaxing the claims, the Spanish court, on the 24th of July, issued a declaration testifying their willingness to comply fully with the demands of his Britannic majesty, by

Spain attempts to interest France.

The French nation is adverse to war with England.

Spain, hopeless of aid, yields to the demands of Britain.

The disputes are adjusted in a convention.

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rendering satisfaction and compensation. In order to mitigate to the people of Spain the bitterness of a just concession, extorted by fear, the declaration[u] set forth that his catholic majesty was fully persuaded the king of Britain would act to him in the same manner, under similar circumstances. Mr. Fitzherbert having accepted the declaration, all differences between the courts of Madrid and London were terminated with proper formality and precision, by a convention[x] between his Britannic majesty and the king of Spain, signed at the Escurial, on the 28th of October, 1790. The settlement at Nootka Sound was restored, a full liberty of trade to all the northwest coasts of America, and navigation and fishery in the southern pacific were confirmed to England. Both nations were equally restricted from attempting any settlement nearer to Cape Horn than the most southerly plantations already established by Spain. It was agreed, that should any ground of complaint thereafter arise, no violence should be committed, but the case should be reported to the respective courts, who would bring it to an amicable termination.

THE declaration of the 24th of July having been received in England, and the result communicated by the duke of Leeds, secretary of state, to the lord mayor, and published in the Gazette extraordinary, afforded great pleasure to the nation; but the convention completed the satisfaction of the people, who deemed it equally honourable and advantageous to Britain; as the minister without involving the country in a war, had obtained every compensation which justice could demand; and had shown to other powers, that BRITISH SUBJECTS WERE NOT TO BE MOLESTED WITH IMPUNITY.

u State Papers, July, 24th, 1790. x State Papers, October 28, 1790.

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Continental affairs.—Measures of Britain and her allies for counteracting the ambition of Joseph and Catharine. —Poland friendly to the defensive alliance.—Death of Joseph II. emperor of Germany; and character.— Leopold his successor moderate and pacific.—He agrees to open a congress at Reichenbach.—Military operations between the Austrians and Turks; bloody but indecisive. —Habitual prepossessions of Kaunitz and Hertsberg.— Liberal and wise policy of Britain, and ability of Ewart, —Peace between Austria and Turkey, under the guarantee of the defensive alliance.—Operations between Russia and Turkey.—Siege of Ismail.—Desperately valiant defence.—Stormed.—Cruel and dreadful slaughter.—Campaign between Sweden and Prussia.—Peace between Russia and Sweden.—State of affairs in the Netherlands.—Rise of a democratical spirit.—Its votaries propose to subvert the constituted authorities.— Contests between the aristocratical and democratical revolutionists.—Leopold proposes to avail himself of their dissensions.—He offers to redress their real grievances, but vindicates his right to the sovereignty.—Britain and her allies mediate between the Flemings and Leopold.— Under their guarantee the Netherlands are restored to their ancient privileges.—They obtain further concessions from Leopold.—They find their security in their ancient mixed government.—Proceedings of the French revolutionists in forming the new constitution.—Qualification of active citizens,—preclude universal suffrage. —Division into departments.—New and comprehensive principle of financial legislation.—Confiscation of clerical property.—Civic oath.—Scheme for converting the spoils of the clergy into ready money.—Boundless power of the mob.—The multitude, civil and military, destitute of religion.—Mixture of ridiculous levity and serious iniquity.—Anacharsis Clootz ambassador from the whole

human race.—Abolition of titles and hereditary nobility.—Summary of changes within the year.—Anniversary celebration of the 14th of July in the field of Mars.—Federal oath.—Violent proceedings against those who refused it.—Britain.—The French revolution is better understood.—Mr. Pitt and his friends forbear discussion of its merits.—Majority of literary men favour the new system though they censure its excesses.—Sentiments of Mr. Fox.—The clergy are alarmed by the infidelity and confiscation of the revolutionary system.—Burke's work on the subject—effects.—General election.

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1790. Continental affairs.

WHILE Britain was thus successfully employed in securing the blessings of peace to herself, she was desirous of also extending them to others. The grand scheme of confederacy which was formed by Kaunitz for uniting the great continental powers, had been discomfited by the cooperating talents of William Pitt the English minister, and Frederic the Prussian king. The alliance having since been renewed between the two empires, and endangering the balance of power, had stimulated the son of Pitt, and Frederic's counsellors, to form a new plan of defensive confederation, to counteract the ambitious designs of Russia and Austria.[y] Their project was so extended as to embrace all those states which were likely to be affected by the imperial aggressors. Poland, Sweden, and Turkey, were equally interested in forming a part of this confederacy. Mr. Ewart, British ambassador at Berlin, a man of great abilities, and extensive political knowledge, having attained very considerable influence with the Prussian court, employed it in promoting the purposes of the defensive alliance. This minister, viewing the situation and productiveness of Poland, saw that it might be rendered the source of immense political benefit to the confederacy, and might ultimately produce important commercial advantages to Great Britain. Poland might be rendered a formidable barrier to the designs of Russia; and the acquisitions which Prussia might obtain by another dismemberment of Poland, would not contribute so essen-

Measures of Britain and her allies for counteracting the ambition of Josep!. and Catharine.

y Segur's History of Frederic William, vol. ii. p. 136.

tially to her security as the independence of the Polish monarchy; it was, therefore, the interest of Prussia to support and strengthen that neighbour.[z] The Poles themselves were made sensible that it would be mutually beneficial to Prussia and that country to be closely connected. Having long nourished the most indignant resentment against the Russians, their rage was recently inflamed by the insolence of the imperial confederates, who, without asking their consent, had stationed large bodies of troops in their territories, and even urged them to enter into an alliance against Turkey, a power which had been always friendly to Poland; induced by these considerations, they readily acceded to the defensive union, and made vigorous preparations. This confederacy, when joined to the belligerent opposers of the two empires, constituted a sextuple[a] alliance, comprehending Great Britain, Prussia, Holland, Sweden, Poland, and Turkey. Its first and principal object was to save the Ottoman empire from the grasp of the imperial confederates; and to afford to the contracting parties reciprocal protection from the boundless ambition of the combined aggressors. Not only to liberate Poland from its subjection to Catharine, but to draw to the English ports the numerous productions, naval and commercial, of that extensive and fertile country, formed a secondary, but essential object of British policy. As negotiation was the first purpose of the powers which were not actually engaged, they made overtures for a congress, which, though rejected by Russia, they, from a recent change in the sovereignty of Austria, expected to meet with a more favourable reception from that power.

Poland friendly to the defensive alliance.

Joseph II. emperor of Germany, whose life had been chiefly distinguished for extent and variety of project terminating in disappointment, had long laboured under bodily distemper; if not caused in its origin, increased in its operation, and accelerated in its effects, by the distresses of a mind impatient of crosses encountered from its own injustice, precipitancy, and folly. The gleam of success from Turkey was soon forgotten in the gloomy

Death of Joseph II. emperor of Germany.

z Otridge's Annual Register, 1791.—Segur, vol. ii. passim.
a Otridge's Annual Register, 1791, chap. i.

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prospect which opened from the Netherlands. The unbounded spirit of reform had produced subversion; the attempt to govern without control had, in the most valuable part of his dominions, left him no subjects to command. In Hungary also, his innovations generated discontent, discontent demands of redress; demands of redress were first haughtily refused, but at length extorted concession. Indeed, his imperious severity appeared softened, and his ambition weakened as he approached that period when earthly power and glory could no longer avail. In his last illness, he sought consolation in that religion which for so great a part of his life he had disregarded, and learned on his deathbed, how absurd and pernicious the attempt was to suppress in his subjects that principle which only could restrain turbulent passion, and heal a wounded breast. In the langour of illness, and the awful hour of dissolution, he saw that his policy had been as unwise as unjust; and that disgrace and disaster awaits the prince who attempts to enslave a free and gallant people. Being now weaned from the ambition which had so much agitated his life, he acquired tranquillity, and preserved it to the last. On the 20th of February he expired, in the forty-ninth year of his age, the twenty-fifth of his imperial reign as the successor of his father, and the ninth of his sovereignty over the Austrian dominions as the heir of his mother.

and character.

Joseph II. was by nature ardent in spirit, active in disposition, and fond of distinction. His situation cherished in such a mind the love of power which he had so much the means of gratifying. With lively feeling, but without strength of understanding and originality of genius, in his objects and undertakings he was the creature of imitation. From the splendor of Frederic's character, his illustrious exploits, and his immense improvement of his dominions, as well as the vicinity of their situation, and personal and political intercourse, he chose for a model the Prussian king, without discrimination to understand the peculiar features of his supposed archetype; acuteness to discern the principles and rules of that monarch's conduct, or compass of mind to comprehend the general system of his measures and actions. He also

was an admiring imitator of Catharine, and supposed himself the confident of her counsels when he was only the tool of her schemes. From both he copied infidelity,[b] but did not copy from them that prudent policy which cherished religion in their subjects, adapted themselves in appearance to the popular prepossessions, and made their respective churches engines of state. He imitated their ambitious projects without possessing the wisdom of plan, or the consistent and well directed vigour of execution, which accomplished their designs. Springing from a variety of causes, and encouraged to a certain extent by these sovereigns, there prevailed in Europe a great disposition to reform. Frederic clearly apprehending what was right or wrong, innovated wherever change was improvement. Joseph was a reformist because innovation was the favourite pursuit of the times; and on the same principles, by which private votaries of some favourite fashion are often actuated, sought distinction by being a leader of the reigning mode, without considering how far it was wise, prudent, or suited to the circumstances in which he was placed. His pursuit of reform being neither accommodated to the habits nor to the sentiments of its objects, was the primary end of his conduct; and from the violence of his temper, and the total want of moderation, the principal source of his manifold disasters. In his wars, as well as in his internal politics, Joseph was a factitious and imitative character. Without military talents or inclinations, without well founded prospects of advantage, he appears to have sought hostilities from the desire of rivalling his warlike neighbours. Joseph's misfortunes arose entirely from his incapacity of directing himself, and from not being counselled by able and upright men. Without sound judgment himself, he wanted wise and faithful advisers[c] to oppose projects which were evidently hurtful to the projector. Qualities apparently contrary, indecision with precipitation, obstinacy with fickleness and inconstancy, openness, and benignity of

b See Abbé Barruel, vol. i.

c The ruling principle of Kaunitz being the elevation of the house of Austria, successful as he had been as the counsellor of the prudent Maria Theresa, yet he soothed and abetted the impetuous Joseph, in projects that eventually tended to its depression.

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manner and countenance, with duplicity and faithlessness, arose from the same source; an understanding which judged without examination; and a will directed by temporary impulse, without any fixed principles of conduct. The character of Joseph, from his condition, was very conspicuous in its operation, and very pernicious in its effects; but instead of being, as has been often represented, *singular*, is, in its springs and constituents, EXTREMELY COMMON. Whoever observes, in private life, vivacity of fancy without soundness of judgment; ardour of disposition and eagerness of pursuit, without just appreciation of end, or skilful selection of means; emulation in mere fashion; multiplicity of project formed without wisdom, and carried on without constancy, beholds, in a confined scene, the same character exhibited which the world contemplated on the great European theatre, performed by Joseph II. emperor of Germany.

Leopold, his successor, moderate and pacific.

JOSEPH was succeeded by his brother Leopold, grand duke of Tuscany, a prince of a very different character. Accustomed to the pleasurable regions of Italy, and the enervating refinement of Italian manners, Leopold, presiding at Florence, was chiefly distinguished for luxurious softness; and having no incentives to war, or opportunities of ambition, was habitually pacific, and actually indolent. Both from nature and circumstances, and perhaps also from contemplating the effects of his brother's violence, he was remarkable for moderation. When, instead of being an Italian prince, he became head of the house of Austria, he demonstrated that his apparent indolence arose from the want of motives to action, and not from an inherent inertness of character; he showed himself firm and efficient, but retained his moderation and pacific disposition; and though he did not possess superior talents, was, by his mixed steadiness and prudence,[d] well qualified to remedy the evils which had proceeded from the capricious and violent Joseph. Averse himself from war as an *adventure of ambition*, he saw, in the circumstances of his affairs, and his relations to foreign powers, strong reasons for promoting his disposition to peace. He was involved

d See Otridge's Annual Registers for 1791 and 1792. Passim; also Segur, vol. ii.

in hostilities with his own subjects: at variance with the principal electors, he was in danger on being excluded from the imperial throne: the conquests on the desolated borders of Turkey, obtained at an immense expense, were of little value. The supplies for carrying on the war had lost, in the Netherlands, their most productive source. A hundred thousand disciplined Prussians hovered over the frontiers of Bohemia, while three other armies were prepared to act in different quarters. England would pour her wealth, and Prussia her troops, to support the revolted Netherlands. From war Austria had little to gain and much to lose. For these reasons Leopold was disposed to pacification, and acceded to a proposal for opening a congress at Reichenbach in Silesia. Meanwhile the campaign was opened on the frontiers of Turkey. Selim, to compensate the impolicy, and consequent losses of the former year, chose for his vizier Hassan Aly, a man of great ability. The Turks, who imputed the adverse events of the last campaign, to the misconduct of the late vizier, were ready and eager to renew the contest, and a great army was prepared. The sultan spared no aid, which superstition could afford, to inspirit his troops. He clad them in black, to denote their readiness to meet death in defence of their cause; and, in concurrence with his chief priests, proclaimed a remission of their sins to all who should die in battle: these incentives, cooperating with the native valour of the Turks, early in the season he had four hundred thousand men ready to take the field. The campaign on the Danube was opened by the capture of Orsova, which having been blockaded during the whole winter by the Austrians, was suddenly reduced through the misapprehension of the garrison. The Turks, conceiving a shock of an earthquake to be the explosion of a mine, were struck with a panic, and supposing themselves about to be blown up, immediately surrendered. A detachment of the Austrians besieged Guirgewo, but the Ottomans, resuming their wonted courage, marched to its relief. Encountering the Austrians, they fought with the most desperate valour, threw those brave and disciplined troops into confusion, and defeated them with the loss of three thousand men. Among the killed was count Thorn

He agrees to open a congress at Reichenbach.

Military operations between the Austrians and Turks;

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the general, whose head the Turks, agreeably to the custom of those ferocious barbarians, displayed in triumph through the army. This was the last act of hostilities carried on between the Turks and the Austrians.

bloody but indecisive.

Habitual prepossessions of Kaunitz and Hertsberg.

At Reichenbach the ambition of Kaunitz, which, for forty years, had been chiefly directed to aggrandize the house of Austria, still entertained hopes of acquiring advantages from the Russian confederacy, and the prosecution of the Turkish war, and was averse to the peace. Count Hertsberg, the Prussian minister, formed under Frederic, and considering every maxim of that illustrious monarch's policy as the rule of conduct, without adverting to the change of circumstances, desired to attack Austria when weak and exhausted; dispossess her of the rest of Silesia, abet the revolt in the Netherlands, and prevent the elevation of Leopold to the imperial throne. A more comprehensive and liberal policy, however, originating in the wise councils of Britain, and urged by Mr. Ewart, inculcated the necessity of sacrificing hereditary enmity to solid interest, and influenced the Prussian king. Leopold being no less disposed to conciliation, tranquillity was, without difficulty, established; and on the 27th of July a convention was concluded. The king of Hungary agreed to open a negotiation for peace, on the basis of reciprocal restitution under the umpirage of the defensive alliance.[e] The empress of Russia was to be invited to accede to these conditions; but if she should refuse, Leopold was to observe a perfect neutrality between the contending potentates. The king of Prussia would cooperate with the maritime powers to allay the troubles in the low countries, and restore them to the Austrian dominions, on condition that their ancient privileges and constitution were reestablished. The English and Dutch ministers engaged in behalf of the respective courts, to guarantee those stipulations; and an armistice for nine months was, not long after, concluded between Leopold and the Turks, which, notwithstanding various obstacles, arising from the artifices of Catharine, terminated in a peace. The war between

Liberal and wise policy of Britain, and ability of Ewart.

Peace between Austria and Turkey, under the guarantee of the defensive alliance.

e Segur, who shows himself well acquainted with continental politics, betrays gross ignorance of the views of Britain, when he deems this league to spring from offensive ambition. See vol. ii. chap. i.

Russia and Turkey was this year languid in its operations, as Catharine's attention was chiefly directed to the congress in Silesia, and also to schemes of policy in various quarters: some desultory engagements took place, both by land and on the Black Sea, but without any important event. To facilitate her favourite objects of driving the Turks from Europe, and raising her grandson to the Byzantine throne, the empress persevered in a plan of detaching the Greek subjects of Turkey from their obedience. By her encouragement, and pecuniary assistance, a rebellion was fomented in Albania: the leader of the insurgents defeated a Turkish governor; and acquired such power and confidence as to form a regular and extensive plan for emancipating themselves from the Turkish yoke, and offering the sovereignty of Greece to the Russian prince. A memorial,[f] not unworthy of the descendants of ancient Greeks, stating both the object and plan, was presented to Catharine, and very graciously received; but before it could be matured, Russia had been induced, if not to relinquish, to postpone her plan of subjugating Turkey. It was the latter end of autumn before prince Potemkin was in motion: his tardy commencement of the campaign was not without policy and design. The Russian troops, inured to the colds of the north, were much less adapted to the summer heats even of their own southern frontiers. The Asiatic Turks, on the contrary, could easily bear the solstitial season in countries so much colder than their own as the banks of the Danube and the confines of Tartary: but even the autumnal cold of those countries they could not endure; and on the approach of winter it was their uniform practice to leave the army, and return to warmer latitudes. Potemkin, knowing the number and valour of those troops, deferred his military operations until they had taken their departure. His plan was, first to reduce Ismail, then Braicklow, which would complete the Russian conquest to the Danube; passing that river, to place himself between the Turkish army and Constantinople, and thus compel the vizier either to risk an engagement, or to

Operations between Russia and Turkey.

f The reader will find a translation of this ingenious and eloquent performance in Otridge's Annual Register for 1791, page 278.

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accept of a peace on terms prescribed by Russia. Abandoned by the Asiatics, the Turkish army did not exceed forty thousand men. Dissensions and conspiracies prevailed in Constantinople, and the affairs of the Turks were in the most critical and dangerous state; but the divan, unbroken by these distressing circumstances, had resolved to maintain the Ottoman independence to the last extremity; and for the accomplishment of his purpose, Selim trusting not only to the resources which still remained, but to the vigorous mediation of the defensive alliance, cherished and supported the firmness of his council. The town of Ismail had always been deemed the key of the lower Danube: it was surrounded by two walls, covered by their respective ditches, of considerable depth and breadth, and capable of being filled with the waters of the Danube. A select and numerous garrison had been early appointed, with an artillery amounting to more than three hundred pieces, and lately reinforced by thirty thousand men. The Russian forces on the Danube were formed into three divisions; one commanded by prince Potemkin, a second by prince Repnin, the third by general Suwaroff. To this last body, covered and supported by the two others, the siege of Ismail was intrusted. Suwaroff surrounded the place with batteries constructed on every spot of ground which would answer the purpose: and these were loaded with forges for heating the balls, with the heaviest battering artillery and mortars and every other engine of destruction hitherto invented. On the 22d of December the besiegers made a general assault in eight columns: the Turks received them with intrepid valour. Five times were the Russians repulsed: five times they renewed the attack; and at the last onset were discomfited with a slaughter which seemed to render all farther effort hopeless. The besiegers now began to think of nothing but to sell their lives as dearly as possible, when Suwaroff, having dismounted his cavalry to supply the slain infantry, snatched a standard, and running up a scaling ladder, planted it with his own hand on a Turkish battery. Reanimated to enthusiasm by the personal prowess of their general, the Russians not only withstood the attack of the pursuing enemy, but repulsed them, and again became the assailants.

Siege of Ismail.

Desperately valiant defence.

Stormed.

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The Turks disputed every inch of ground; but the Russians being reinforced by fresh troops from the covering armies, by numbers overpowered the valiant defenders of Ismail; carried post after post till they reduced the whole. With the fury of enraged barbarians, they effected a merciless, horrid, and undistinguishing slaughter, which spared neither age nor sex. The annals of Attila or of Gesneric, in the benighted ages of Northern Europe, furnish no record of savage butchery which surpasses the carnage at Ismail, by troops employed, according to their mistress's professions, to expel barbarism from this quarter of the globe, and instead of the bloody superstition of Mahomed, to establish the mild and peaceful religion of the meek and benevolent Jesus: such was the Russian mode of making converts to the Greek church, and extending christianity. The inflexible endurance[g] of the vanquished was as great as the inflicting cruelty of the conquerors; as the Russians would give, the Turks would receive no quarter: they either rushed on the bayonet, plunged into the Danube, or sought death by some means equally efficacious. Twenty-four thousand of the Turkish soldiers perished in this bloody contest: the governor of Ismail was found covered with wounds! the whole number of massacred Turks, including inhabitants of all ages, sexes, and conditions, amounted nearly to thirty-one thousand.[h] The slain on the side of the Russians exceeded ten thousand men, among whom were many of their officers.

Cruel and dreadful slaughter.

Campaign between Sweden and Russia.

The king of Sweden, having entirely conciliated the affections of his people, and excited their admiration, by his conduct in the preceding year, was, through their unanimous efforts, enabled to open the campaign of 1790 early in the season. In the beginning of April, putting himself at the head of three thousand forces in Finland, he penetrated into the Savalax, a district of Russia not far

g The suffering fortitude of the Turks illustrates the very ingenious reasoning of Dr. Smith, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, wherein he accounts for the unconquerable firmness of savages.

h About three hundred Circassian women, consisting partly of those belonging to the governor's haram, and partly of others who had fled thither for refuge from other harams, were preserved and protected by an English gentleman, in the Russian service, colonel Cobley, who commanded the dismounted cavalry, when they were on the point of throwing themselves into the Danube to escape violation from the Cossack and Russian soldiers. See Otridge's Annual Register for 1791, page 101.

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from Wiborg. Alarmed by the approach of the enemy within a hundred miles of Petersburgh, Catharine sent ten thousand troops to obstruct his progress. They found their enemy intrenched in a very strong position. Trusting to their superior numbers, the Russians attacked the Swedish lines; but the cool intrepid courage of the Swedes, headed by the personal valour and genius of their sovereign, repelled the attack: it was soon, however, renewed by the impulse of national pride, rivalry, indignation, and shame of being defeated by such a handful of men. The engagement, for about two hours, was most desperate, obstinate, and bloody; but rage, fury, and superior numbers, gave way at last, to calm and determined valour. The Russians left about two thousand dead upon the spot, and Gustavus, encouraged by this success, advanced farther into Russia. Meanwhile, the fleet under the duke of Suddermania sailed up the gulf of Finland. The prince projected the destruction of the Russian squadron lying in the port of Revel, the great naval arsenal, along with its docks and magazines. The ships were, eleven of the line, three of which carried a hundred guns each, and five frigates; and they were protected by numerous batteries. The Swedish fleet, notwithstanding all these obstacles, on the 13th of May penetrated into the harbour, and in the midst of the hostile fire, maintained for four hours a doubtful conflict; but towards the evening a violent storm arose, which obliged the Swedes to retreat. They afterwards fell in with a Russian fleet from Cronstadt, and an engagement ensued, in which the Swedes at first appeared superior, when night intervening interrupted the contest. The next day battle being renewed, while the Swedish fleet was engaged with the enemy in front, the squadron from Revel appearing in the rear, the duke was in extreme danger of being surrounded, but by judicious manœuvres and bold exertions, assisted by a favourable wind, he extricated himself from the danger, and joined his royal brother not far from Wiborg. Against this city the land and naval force of Sweden directed their efforts; but while they were making dispositions for the purpose, the Russian fleet came in sight. The Swedes were now hemmed in between the united squadrons of Russia and the garrison of Wiborg.

His majesty and his army were accompanied by a fleet of galleys, which were likewise enclosed; the only alternative, therefore, was, to force their way through the enemy or to surrender: the former was of course chosen: they effected their escape, but not without incurring very great loss of ships and troops, that were either taken or sunk: the whole number of men either killed or captured, amounted to seven thousand. The genius of Gustavus, stimulated by difficulty, soon refitted his shattered fleet, and recruited his diminished army. On the 9th of July, with his armament, he encountered a large Russian fleet, commanding his own squadron in person, he immediately offered them batttle, and conducted his operations with so masterly skill, that, after a very obstinate conflict, he gained a decisive victory. The loss of the Russians amounted to four thousand five hundred prisoners, and nearly as many killed and wounded. This defeat astonished and alarmed Catharine: in the great talents of Gustavus, she was at last convinced, she had to encounter a formidable foe, which she had not apprehended in a contest with Sweden. Such an antagonist was not to be subdued either by overwhelming numbers, or the adversity of fortune. Being now abandoned by the Austrians, and threatened by the English and Prussians, she saw her projects respecting Turkey had little chance of being accomplished, if she continued at war with Sweden: she therefore directed the chief efforts of her policy to the attainment of a peace; she accordingly signified to Gustavus a pacific disposition. The Swedish king, finding his country greatly exhausted by her extrordinary efforts, and not doubting that the defensive alliance would repress the ambitious projects of Russia as far as general security required, was not averse to these overtures of amity. Neither Catharine nor Gustavus communicated to their allies their pacific intentions, but concluded between themselves an armistice, which in the middle of August, terminated in a peace.

Peace between Russia and Sweden.

FREED from a Turkish war, Leopold had leisure to turn his chief attention to the affairs of the Netherlands. The Flemings had begun their opposition to Joseph from a desire of preserving existing establishments. They limited their wishes and designs to the maintenance of

State of affairs in the Netherlands.

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that constitutional liberty, which they inherited from their ancestors. Their principle of conduct was totally different from that of the French. Dislike of innovation, ecclesiastical, civil, and political, was the leading feature of the Flemish character at the time they renounced their allegiance to Joseph of Austria. But the vicinity of the Netherlands to France produced a close intercourse between the two countries, and opened the way to the French doctrines, which various causes now cooperated to disseminate. Since the revolt the states general had exercised the supreme authority: the composition of that body was, in a considerable degree, aristocratical, as the states of the nobility and clergy had a greater share in the representation than the commons: this inequality was very soon remarked by the members of the third estate, and strongly reprobated by those who either had imbibed democratical notions; or from ambition, by raising the commons proposed to aggrandize themselves. So early as January 1790, a number of individuals, professing such sentiments, formed themselves into an association, which they called a patriotic assembly. After passing various resolutions of partial and subordinate reform, they framed a general and comprehensive system of revolution, which, subscribed by two thousand persons, they published as an address to the states, in the name of the people. They therein decreed the permanent exercise of sovereign authority, an aristocratical despotism, equally contrary to the rights of the people as the imperial tyranny of Joseph. The states general they allowed with propriety, exercised the sovereign power on the *dismission* of the emperor, and the declared independence of the Belgic provinces. But this authority, arising from a temporary cause, could only endure until a legitimate constitution, formed and ratified by the people, could be established. The ancient constitution of the Austrian Netherlands was no more. It fell by the stroke that cut off its head, Joseph II. of Austria, representative of the dukes of Burgundy, in whom the functions of the other branches of the legislature centered: they were not original and absolute, but relative and conditional, The states general were therefore responsible to the people for all which they had done

Rise of a democratical spirit.

Its votaries propose to subvert all the constituted authorities.

since the deposition of the emperor: a national assembly only could insure tranquillity and security to the commonwealth. These principles and claims were very offensive to the two higher orders, as they were totally inimical to the power which they wished to retain without controul. Knowing the influence of the parish priests among the people, they attempted to employ these in persuading their respective parishioners to sign a counter address, requesting the states to seize and punish all those disturbers who wished to introduce innovations in their religion and constitution. Those clergymen, however, connected by the closest intimacy and friendship with their flocks, were by no means zealous and active in recommending a measure so very unpopular. The states farther endeavoured to prevent the sentiments which they wished to inculcate from being counteracted through the press. They issued a decree, that this great engine of public opinion should be limited to the same restrictions as under the sovereignty of the emperor; that all literary works should be subject to the scrutiny of censors, before they were republished; and that all publishers should be responsible for the contents of the books which they presented to the world. These attempts to restrain the actions, and even control the thoughts, of the people, gave great dissatisfaction to those who wished for a larger portion of democracy in the constitution. The two higher orders, joined by a common opposition to the democratical schemes, formed one party, while the third, and all those who were inimical to privileged orders, formed another party. The nobility, on their side, possessed great inheritances, and were reverenced on account of their ancient families, and many of them highly esteemed for their personal characters: but the clergy, in a country distinguished for extreme bigotry, possessed peculiar influence: these circumstances prevented democratic turbulence from rising to the pitch which it would have otherwise attained. But the discontented restlessness of innovation soon triumphed in the minds of the populace over the submissive acquiescence of superstition. The higher orders attempted to awe the multitude by force, but soon found that here, as in France, the army had embraced the popular side.

Contests between the aristocratical and democratical revolutionists.

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The commander of the Flemish troops was general Vandermersch, who, after having long served under the emperor, on the first dawnings of the revolution had returned to his native country. This gentleman was distinguished for his military talents and recent successes: he embraced the popular side, and spread his sentiments through the army. In March an attempt was made by the aristocratical party to remove the commander from his office, and deputies were sent by the states for this purpose. In this situation the general adopted very bold measures: being nominated by the army commander in chief of the Belgic forces, in defiance of the states, he ordered the deputies to be committed to prison. He issued a proclamation, declaring that he was placed at the head of an army for the purpose of defending the civil and religious rights of the people, which he was determined to protect from all invasion. Officers of similar sentiments were placed at the head of the war departments; and next to Vandermesch in the command of the army were the duke of Ursel and the prince of Arenberg. The states ordered the troops which were stationed at Brussels to march against the general. A civil war appeared on the eve of commencement between the aristocratic and democratic parties; but the army, by some sudden impulse of passion, the causes of which have never been ascertained, abandoned that general whom they had so highly valued and recently exalted, and gave him up to the rage of his enemies. The congress of the states at this time was chiefly directed by Vandernoot and Van Eupen; the former a lay nobleman, the latter an ecclesiastic. Under their direction, charges were drawn up against the general; and also against the duke of Ursel, hereditary chief of the nobles in Brabant, a man of large fortune and popular character. Vandermersch was doomed to a dungeon at Antwerp: Ursel was arrested and confined for five weeks, without any form of justice: but being tried and acquitted, he was still retained in confinement until a strong body of volunteers forcibly rescued him from this tyranny. These unjust and violent proceedings of the aristocratic party excited the severest reprobation of their adversaries. Priests and feudal tyrants (they said) had

seized the sceptre and sword, and used them as instruments of injustice and cruelty against the most patriotic and exalted characters.

A GOVERNMENT which had, in a few months from its formation, manifested such discord, was not likely to be permanent. The army having lost its honour as well as its general, became disheartened, and was now not unfrequently defeated. Great supplies were wanted for maintaining and paying the troops; but the congress had so disgusted the principal cities, that their applications for a loan were totally unsuccessful. Attempts were made in Holland and in England, but to no purpose; and it was evident that the Belgic states were every day, from their internal dissensions, becoming weaker in power, and less important in the estimation of foreign countries.

Leopold prepares to avail himself of their dissensions.

LEOPOLD, aware of these circumstances, sent a memorial to the people of the Netherlands, which professed sincere regret for the despotic proceedings of the Austrian government; and declared the disposition of the prince to redress all their real grievances, but vindicated his undoubted right to the sovereignty of the Netherlands, and announced his resolution to maintain his claim. This address, together with the situation of affairs, revived the loyalists, or friends of the house of Austria; who, before overawed by the prevailing power, had made no efforts to resist. As the folly and violence of the present government became more evident and more hateful, this party increased: many moderate men, who had at first favoured the revolution, compared the present miserable situation with the tranquillity and contentment enjoyed under Maria Theresa. A coalition of priests and nobles (they observed) was formed, obviously for the purposes of self interest and ambition. If the states general should continue to govern, the Belgic nation must groan under a twofold aristocracy. If a republic were attempted on democratical principles, the first probable consequence would be anarchy; which, after producing all its horrible evils, would terminate in a single despotism. An hereditary monarchy, properly limited and modified, appeared most suitable to the character and habits of the Flemings. These considerations induced many considerate men to favour a reconciliation

He offers to redress their real grievances, but vindicates his right to the sovereignty.

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Qualifications of active citizens,

precludes universal suffrage.

Division into departments

New and comprehensive principle of financial legislation.

ed by the appellation of active citizens. The activity was to consist in contributing to the public exigencies, an annual sum not less than half a crown. By requiring this qualification in electors, they contravened their own principles of equality, and precluded universal suffrage; they excluded from legislation, beggars and many other citizens, not only effectually active in their respective vocations, but active by their tumults in the streets and galleries, in controling the national assembly itself. It farther debarred from the legislation, the deliberative wisdom of fish women and prostitutes, whose executorial efforts, had so powerfully promoted the revolutionary schemes. The primary assemblies, constituted with these exceptions to equality, were to choose electoral assemblies; the electoral assemblies delegates to the legislative, judges, and executive administrators. That no vestige of antiquity might remain, they proceeded in the abolition of provincial distinctions; and dividing the whole kingdom into eighty-three departments, consolidated the diversities into one mass: as a geographical arrangement, this change was executed with great skill and ability, the departments chiefly took their names from mountains, rivers, and seas, which shape and bound countries; and as a political alteration, it certainly tended to render the government more uniform. A plan was established of municipal jurisdictions, to constitute a fourth assembly, to be chosen by the same electoral assembly which, constituted by the primary, appointed the members of the legislature. Financial legislation next occupying their attention, they began this branch of politics as they had begun others, by establishing a simple and comprehensive principle, which would apply to every possible case. They enunciated a theorem totally new in jurisprudence, that *all property belongs to the nation*. Having declared their sovereign power over property, the next question was, how private and corporate wealth was to be forth coming. They saw it would be prudent to augment the pay of the army which was so very serviceable to the revolutionists, and which would become more and more attached to systems of confiscation, by sharing in the proceeds. There were many and numerous demands upon the public, and it was farther expedient to have a govern-

mental bank, which would be able to accommodate the nation by advances, but a capital was wanting. Whatever their lawgivers were in wisdom and virtue they certainly manifested the national ingenuity in fertile invention and prompt expedient. They soon discovered a very efficient fund for the exigency, in the landed estates of the clergy; some politicians opposed the seizure of clerical property, not as unjust, because they knew its justice had been already established in the new code of ethics; but as impolitic. The appropriation would enrage the clergy, who still retained great influence among the less enlightened people; and would also displease and alarm foreign powers, who might not only reprobate a confiscation, but dread the principle: these admonitions, however, were of little avail. A decree was passed declaring the ecclesiastical estates to be at the disposal of the nation. The clergy expostulated on the robbery, and excited great discontents among their votaries, which were farther increased by the nobility indignant at their own degradation. To counteract the growing disaffection, the assembly spread reports of plots and conspiracies, and thus by alarming their fears, diverted the attention of the people from the iniquities of government. Rumours were spread, that the princes were now in exile at Turin, and the aristocrats both in and out of the kingdom were confederating with foreign princes to effect a counter revolution. Aware that the king was considered by their adversaries as a prisoner, and that his acts could in that supposition be no longer binding, than the compulsion lasted, they endeavoured to procure from him an approbation of their proceedings which should appear voluntary; they attempted to prevail on his mild and compliant disposition, to come to the assembly and explicitly declare himself the head of the revolution, and satisfied with all their proceedings; but this application his majesty resolutely refused. Finding the king inflexible, the republicans disseminated reports of new plots and conspiracies, for rescuing Lewis from his present situation. To deter aristocrats and loyalists from such an attempt, it was very frequently declared in common conversation, and in the clubs, that an endeavour to extricate the king would certainly produce

Confiscation of clerical property.

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his death. The queen was very openly and loudly threatened as the instigator of his majesty's refusal; the benignant Lewis from tenderness for his wife and children, was induced to make a concession, which no apprehensions for his personal safety could have extorted; and he repaired to the national assembly, and spoke to the purport desired by the republicans. The democratic party seeing the anti-republicans overwhelmed with dismay by the acquiescence of the king, resolved to take advantage of the consternation, and issued a decree obliging every member to take a newly devised civic oath, under the penalty of exclusion from voting in the assembly. They now published a general address to the nation, stating their acts and measures for the sake of public liberty, and their farther intentions in order to complete the great work of regenerating France. Various tumults having arisen, and murders and other outrages having been committed both at Paris and Versailles, the ringleaders were seized and punished by the assembly, which with considerable vigour chastised such riots and disorders, as did not promote its own purposes. Having again reestablished nearly as much quietness as they wanted, and attained their object from the king, they resumed the affairs of the clergy. In February, they suppressed all monastic establishments, and for ever confiscated the lands. By another decree in April, they forfeited all the territorial possessions of the church, for the payment of the public debts, but generously allowed the plundered proprietors a small annual pittance from the booty. As the spoils were not immediately convertible into ready money, they employed them as *pledges*. They issued out a species of notes under the name of *assignats*, being assignments to the public creditor of confiscated property; and payable to bearer, that they might serve the purpose of a bank paper currency. About this time they began to affect an imitation of the Roman republic, and adopting its phraseology with one of its customs, decreed that mural crowns should be publicly presented to the conquerors of the Bastile.

Civic oath.

Scheme for converting the spoils of the clergy into ready money.

Boundless powers of the mob.

THE legislature were not without experiencing inconveniences from the diffusion of their own doctrines. They had found it necessary to idolise the mob; to talk of the

majesty of the people; their supreme authority; their uncontrolable sway to which all things must bend. These ideas with the experience of their own force, operating on the ardent fancies and combustible passions of the French populace, meetings, clubs, parties, and individuals considered themselves as collectively and separately, rulers of the empire. They indeed regarded the national assembly as a necessary legislative, and executive organ, but subject to their own general and supreme control. As force was the great spring of government, the soldiers with reason claimed an important share in the direction of affairs; and by the laws of equality deemed themselves exempted from every degree of subordination and obedience, excepting, so far as suited their wishes or convenience. Both the populace and soldiers conceived, that by their political regeneration, they were entitled without restraint to gratify every passion. The most active of the revolutionary leaders had spared no pains to banish from the people, that salutary moderator of passion, the christian religion.[i] In extent of despotic power, the French mob equalled the Turkish sultan; the army the janissaries; and the national assembly the divan, despotic under the despot and his soldiers, but totally dependant upon these for its own sway. But the horrible tyranny of Turkish rule was mitigated by the Alcoran, whereas the despotic license of France was devoid of any such corrective. A great portion of the vulgar both civil and military were ranked infidels. Thus destitute of moral restraint, all the energy of a most ingenious people, all the French force and versatility of intellect and temperament, were the instruments of moral depravity. A great object of the republicans in the assembly had uniformly been to identify in the opinion of the civil and military vulgar, their interests and views with their own; and like other demagogues, while they professed to admit the rabble as their associates, really to employ them as their tools, and they in a great measure accomplished their purpose. There was under the direction of the national

The multitude civil and military destitute of religion.

i Mirabeau laid it down as an axiom in the science of politics, that if they would have an effectual reform, they must begin by expelling christianity from the kingdom. This maxim was loudly praised, and generally followed by the republican partisans.

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assembly, an army much more numerous than ever had been commanded by the French monarchs.

MANY of the nobility, as we have seen, had been the zealous votaries of reform, while they conceived it tending to limited freedom and limited monarchy. But they had always been deficient in point of concert, by suffering separate and subordinate views to occupy their attention, they had facilitated the progress of republicanism. They had already felt the fatal effects of disunion, among the opponents of jacobinism militant, they were destined to feel them more severely from jacobinism triumphant.

Mixture of ridiculous levity and serious iniquity.

There was in the proceedings of the French democrats, a strange mixture of ridiculous levity with the most serious iniquity. Paris at this time overflowed with adventurers from all countries. Among these was a Prussian of the name of Clootz,[k] who having left his own country for reasons recorded in the journals of the police, had resorted to Paris, and assuming the name of the ancient Scythian sage, Anacharsis, set up as a philosopher, and by his lectures instructed the Parisians. But not having hitherto attained notoriety equal to his ambition, he bethought himself of the following expedient to become conspicuous: collecting a great number of his companions and other vagabonds who swarmed about the streets, and hiring all the foreign and grotesque dresses from the opera, and playhouses, he bedecked his retinue; and proceeding to the national assembly, he introduced his followers, as strangers arrived from all countries of the globe, being the virtual ambassadors of all those enslaved nations who wished to be free, and were therefore disposed to enter into fraternity with France, for the glorious purpose of establishing universal liberty. This deputation was most graciously received by the assembly, of which it being evening sitting, many of the members were in a condition[l] suited to a frolic. The legislature after some decrees and resolutions suitable to this contemptible farce, followed their deliberate levity by a very serious act. A decree

Anacharsis Clootz, ambassador from the whole human race.

k Otridge's Annual Register, p. 148.

l Drunkenness, a vice formerly so little known in France, was since the revolution become extremely prevalent even among the lawgivers. Annual Register.

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was proposed for the abolition of titles, and hereditary nobility, with all the heraldic monuments, which would recal to descendants the distinction and merits of their ancestors. In vain the nobles opposed so hasty and violent a proposition, it was immediately passed into a decree. Thus in one year, the national assembly crushed rank and distinction, confiscated property, annihilated hierarchy and aristocracy, left monarchy only an empty name, and perfected their levelling efforts; they now proposed that the 14th of July, the anniversary of the captured Bastile, and of the birth of liberty, should be solemnized by a general confederation of Frenchmen, pledging themselves to maintain the new constitution, and to bind the king, the assembly, and the people civil and military in one general fraternity. This spectacle was exhibited in the field of Mars, appointed to be called ever after, the field of confederation. The king, the assembly, the people and the army, were reciprocally sworn. The same oath was taken the same day through the whole kingdom.

Abolition of titles and hereditary nobility.

Summary of changes within the year.

Anniversary celebration of the 14th of July in the field of Mars.

Mr. Neckar friendly as he had been to the popular side, disapproved very highly of the late democratical proceedings, and especially the confiscations. Being now received with great neglect and displeasure, and being apprehensive of his personal safety, he quitted the kingdom, and retired to Switzerland. In prosecuting their system of reform, the assembly thought it expedient to render the clergy still more dependant on their will. They accordingly passed a decree, imposing on clergymen a new oath, by which they were bound to submit to the constitution as decreed by the assembly, in all cases whatever. This oath was a direct breach of the oath taken at ordination; and great numbers of the clergy refused to swear contrary to their engagements and principles. All the recusants were immediately ejected from their benefices; and their livings filled by others. Thus a republican assembly endeavoured to force mens consciences to be guided by its decrees, and not satisfied with exercising tyranny over persons and property, attempted by the same despotism to enchain their minds.

Federal oath.

Violent proceedings against those who refused it.

This year the French revolution began to be better understood in Britain, and to produce more definite and

Britain.

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specific opinions, either of approbation or censure, or of a mixture of both. Many Britons still continued upon British principles to admire the French revolution, and though they regretted the excesses which had accompanied its operations, yet expected that the violence would subside, and that a system of rational and beneficial liberty would be established. They saw that the plan of polity would considerably deviate from the British constitution. The greater number of literary men continued to favour the changes, and imputed the enormities to the vitiating system of government under which the French had so long lived, joined with the enthusiasm of new liberty. But the most experienced and discriminating of philosophical politicians perceived that the Gallic revolution in its nature, principles, and effects, was different from any former case, and avoided unqualified opinions concerning either its merits, or probable duration. They considered it as a composition of extraordinary phenomena, not yet sufficiently investigated to become the foundation of a just theory; but they saw that the rapidity of French change far exceeded the progressive variations of circumstances, and the human character.[m] Writers of genius and erudition attached to certain visionary principles and doctrines, prized the French revolution more for its particular acts and innovations, than for the general assertion of liberty; and celebrated most highly those measures which overthrew hierarchy, reduced monarchy, and degraded aristocracy. Dissenters of very high literary reputation, and unimpeached private character, were so transported by their peculiar doctrines and sentiments, as to praise the lawless violence of the Parisian mob, and the abduction of the royal family in triumph, because these acts tended to overthrow the existing orders: and even recommended the example of the French to the imitation of the English. The able and eminent Dr. Price, and his many votaries in civil and religious dissent, manifested in 1790, an unqualified admiration of the French changes, and proposed a close connexion between the revolutionists of France, and the people of England. Certain members of parliament,

The French revolution is better understood.

Majority of literary men favour the new system, though they censure its excesses.

m See Dr. William Thomson's letter to Dr. Parr.

at the head of whom was Mr. Fox, continued to admire the principles of the French revolution, as tending eventually to produce a moderate and rational liberty, that would in time fit the circumstances and character of the people, and promote the tranquillity of Europe. The great ministerial leaders, cherishing the principles of constitutional liberty, could not reprobate in another country an attempt to procure that blessing, the enjoyment of which made this nation prosperous and happy; and when they discerned the peculiar nature and tendency of the new system, conceiving that it became statesmen less to speculate than to provide, instead of delivering judgment on the measures of the French, vigilantly watched the conduct of Britons. The sentiments of the minister and its principal supporters concerning the affairs of France, were not hitherto declared. The first open censurers of the French revolution, were courtiers, who being the votaries of pageantry and show, under a kingly government, regarded the pomp and ceremony of the palace more than the vigour and efficacy of the monarchy; who regretted Lewis's loss of royal trappings and appendages, more than the seizure of his power; who considering the king's friends and attendants as no longer enjoying the balls and processions of Versailles, saw grievances which being thoroughly conceived by their fancies, could attract their sympathetic feelings. But a ferocious confiscating democracy, overturning religion and property, did not equally affect their sensibility, because they by no means so clearly understood the nature, or comprehended the extent of the evil. One class, indeed, eminent for ability and learning, venerable for profession and aggregate character, in the early stages of the French revolution, observed its leading principles with horror, and its conduct with dread. The clergy augured ill from a system guided by professed infidels, and sympathizing with plundered brethren, beheld not without apprehension, the contagion of confiscation so very near themselves. In this country, they knew there were men as willing to plunder the church as the most rapacious revolutionists of Paris. But though they disapproved of the French system, they did not deem it expedient to declare an alarm. Such an avowal, they thought, might imply an imputation

Mr. Pitt and his friends forbear discussion of its merits.

The clergy are alarmed by the infidelity and confiscation of the revolutionary system.

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of disloyalty, and enmity to the church, which could not be justly charged to the majority of Britons. English clergymen, therefore, did not decry the revolution, which many other literary men praised. In autumn 1790, the declared sentiments of Britons, with several modifications, were on the whole favourable to the French revolution.

Burke's work on the subject,

One man, however, was destined to affect a speedy and important change. Edmund Burke having formed and delivered in parliament the opinions already recorded, with increasing anxiety continued to bestow the closest attention on revolutionary proceedings. He had many correspondents at Paris, of different nations, abilities, and sentiments. Through them he completed his acquaintance with the French system. While attending to its progress, and its operation within the country which it immediately affected, he carried his views to the impressions that it had made in his own country. Penetrating into the various grounds of the praise which it had procured in England, his sagacity perfectly distinguished between those who rejoiced at what they conceived the emancipation of France, and those who in the destruction of the orders, and forfeiture of property, found a model which they wished to be copied in England. In considering the admirers and supporters of the French revolution, he, from the authority of Dr. Price among his votaries, apprehended that the late promulgation of that gentleman's political opinions in a sermon, might be very hurtful, unless precautions were used to expose the tendency of his doctrines. To convince mankind, especially Britons, that the French revolution did not tend to meliorate but to deprave the human character, to promote happiness, but to produce misery, to be imitated and copied, but to be reprobated and abhorred, Mr. Burke composed and published his work. To establish his position, he analyzed the intellectual principles by which the revolutionists reasoned: the religious, moral, and political principles by which the revolutionists acted; and contended that the effects which had proceeded, and were proceeding, were natural and necessary consequences of the principles and doctrines. He predicted the completion of anarchy and misery from the progressive enormity of the French system. Profound wisdom, solid

and beneficial philosophy, enforced by all the powers of Mr. Burke's eloquence, produced a very great change in public opinion. From this time many men of talents, learning, and political consideration, openly declared sentiments unfavourable to the French revolution. The nobility, with few exceptions, were apprehensive of the danger which awaited their order if French principles became prevalent in Great Britain. The clergy publicly testified the opinion which they before held. Ministers, cautious as they were in avowing any sentiments concerning the French revolution, did not conceal the high estimation in which they held Mr. Burke's production. The public opinion, which at first had been so extremely favourable to the French revolution, was at the end of 1790 greatly divided.

CHAP. XLV. 1790. and effects.

The most important transactions belonging to the internal history of Britain in the recess of 1790, was the general election. The contests were not, however, carried on with the violence of former times. The country was in a state of progressive, and rapidly augmenting prosperity; the minister possessed the public confidence, and no great political question agitated the public mind. The election, which was most warmly disputed, did not owe the contest to the contention of parties. Of the elective bodies in Great Britain, none is of importance equal to Westminster; the seat of government, the royal family, and for half the year the principal nobility and gentry: hence there had usually been a very warm competition in this city. The dispute in 1788 between lord Hood and lord John Townsend, had been carried on with extreme eagerness on both sides; and with an expense calculated to have exceeded even the costly election of 1784. It was tacitly understood between the two parties, that at the general election there should be no contest, but that lord Hood and Mr. Fox should be jointly chosen. This apparent determination was represented to many electors of Westminster, as a coalition between the candidates to insure themselves the choice, and thus deceive the inhabitants. Mr. Horne Tooke a gentleman of great and deserved literary eminence, and also of very conspicuous political conduct, which was variously interpreted, pro-

General election.

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posed himself as the representative; he disavowed all connexion with any party, and assuming an independent tone, procured a respectable number of supporters; he every day exhibited from the hustings a series of acute and poignant observation; clear, direct, and vigorous reasoning, not unworthy of being opposed to the vehement and forcible oratory of his illustrious competitor; his efforts however were unsuccessful. Though there were several disputed elections, yet there was none that attracted so much attention as the poll for Westminster, in which Horne Tooke was pitched against Charles James Fox.

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Meeting of the new parliament.—Convention with Spain is approved by parliament.—Expenses of the late armament.—Unclaimed dividends.—Measures of Britain for repressing the ambition of Russia—submitted to parliament—Mr. Fox opposes hostilities with Russia—argument of Mr. Pitt on the importance of Oczacow—principle of British interference in continental politics—hostilities with Russia unpopular through the nation—war with Russia avoided.—New constitution of Canada—political principles introduced into the discussion.—Mr. Fox incidentally mentions the French revolution—Mr. Burke inveighs against that event, and the new constitution—Mr. Fox explains the extent and bounds of his approbation—declares the British constitution the best for this country—quotes Mr. Burke's speeches and writings favourable to liberty—rupture between these friends, and their final separation.—Question whether impeachments by the commons before the lords, abate with the dissolution of parliament—precedents and arguments for and against—determination of the house that impeachments do not abate by a dissolution.—Liberty of the press—motion of Mr. Fox for ascertaining and declaring the law of libels, and bill for that purpose—arguments for and against—postponed for the present, but is afterwards passed into a law.—State and conduct of the English catholics—they renounce the most dangerous moral and political doctrines of popery—motion for their relief—modified and corrected by Dr. Horseley, it is passed into a law.—Petition of the church of Scotland respecting the test act—is rejected.—Full discussion of the slave trade—motion of Mr. Wilberforce for the abolition—arguments for and against—continuance of the trade defended on the grounds of humanity, justice, and expediency—Messrs. Pitt and Fox agree in supporting the abolition—the motion is negatived.—Settlement

at Sierre Leone.—Finance.—Supplies.—Indian finance. —Trial of Hastings, evidence for the prosecution closed —impressive speech of the defendant.—Session rises.

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1790. Meeting of the new parliament.

THE British parliament opened the 26th of November; and his majesty stated that the dispute between this country and Spain had been brought to an amicable termination. The first subject of parliamentary consideration was the convention[n] with the catholic king. In a question concerning an injury, the great objects to be regarded were reparation for the past, and prevention of future aggression. In the present case, according to opposition, the restitution promised was incomplete, and the promises were not performed. Before the commencement of the dispute, we had possessed and exercised the free navigation of the Pacific Ocean, as well as the right of fishing in the South Seas, without restriction. But the admission of a part only of these rights was all that had been obtained by the convention. Formerly we had claimed the privileges of settling in any part of south or northwest America, from which we were not precluded by previous occupancy. Now, we consented to limit our right of settlement to certain places only, and even in these under various restrictions. What we had retained was vague and undefined, and consequently liable to be again disputed. We had reserved what was insignificant to ourselves, and resigned what was very beneficial to Spain. To these arguments ministers answered, if we had not acquired new rights, we had obtained new advantages. Before the convention, Spain had denied our right to the southern whale fishery, and to navigate the Pacific Ocean; but now she had ratified those claims. In the convention, the wisdom and energy of ministers had vindicated the honour of the British flag, preserved the rights of private citizens, and established the glory of the British name over all the world, without shedding a drop of blood. On these grounds the majority in both houses approved of the terms of the adjustment. The liquidation of the expenses incurred by the late armament, the minister proposed to

Convention with Spain is approved by parliament.

Expenses of the late armament.

n See page 384 of this volume.

separate from the general financial arrangements for the season; and to pay off in four years the incumbrances now incurred, by a distinct plan of finance. The first resource was the balance of the public money, which had accumulated in the hands of the bank of England from *unclaimed dividends*.[o] The bank was agent for the public; received an adequate allowance for its services, and was therefore not entitled to retain a balance greater than the probable demand. Since public creditors forbore punctually demanding their interest, not the bank, who were agents for the payment of that interest, but the nation, their employers, should profit by that forbearance. The balance had been gradually increasing from the year 1727, and now amounted to 660,000*l*. Of this sum the minister moved that 500,000*l*. should be applied to the public service, and that the creditors should have securities in the consolidated fund for payment, whenever the demand should be made. In addition to this sum, he proposed temporary duties upon sugar, British spirits, brandy, rum, malt, assessed taxes, and bills of exchange. Mr. Fox, and some other members, objected to the minister's proposition as unjust to public creditors, and also unfair to the bank. But it appearing to the majority of both houses that the creditors possessed the same security of prompt payment as before, and that no injury could accrue to an agent from his employer withholding money which was not necessary to the transactions which he was appointed to manage: notwithstanding various petitions from the bank, deprecating the application, a bill agreeable to the minister's project was passed into a law.

Unclaimed dividends.

The contest with Spain being thus concluded, another very important subject of foreign politics occupied the attention of parliament. At the congress of Reichenbach, the defensive alliance had proposed to Russia to accede to the peace which Austria was concluding, and that all conquests should be restored; but Catharine constantly replied, that she would admit of no interference between her and the Turks. Deprived, however, of the assistance of Austria,

Measures of Britain for repressing the ambition of Russia.

o Many of the public creditors had omitted to demand their dividends when due; the money, therefore, issued for their payment, was used by the bank until the proprietors should demand the payment.

in the strength and determination of the allies she saw the impracticability of subjugating Turkey for the present, and now offered to restore all her acquisitions by the war, except the town and dependencies of Oczacow. This possession, she conceived, would on the one hand secure her dominions against the irruptions of the Tartars, and on the other command an entrance into Turkey, whenever circumstances should prove more favourable to the execution of her ambitious designs. The allied powers perfectly comprehended the objects of Catharine, and deemed them incompatible with that tranquillity which it was the purpose of the confederacy to insure. There was, besides, an unfriendly disposition long manifested by Russia towards Great Britain. During our difficulties, she had headed a confederation for the express purpose of reducing the naval power of this country. When the commercial treaty between England and Russia was expired, Catharine not only declined renewal, but obliged our merchants to pay in duties twenty-five per cent. more than she exacted from other countries, though they gave half a year's credit for their exports, and were always a whole year in advance for their imports. At the same time she concluded commercial treaties with France[p] and Spain, on terms that were advantageous to both these countries. Such indications of enmity to this country, joined to her ambitious projects, strongly impelled the British government to prevent the encroachments of the empress's court. Britain and her allies still adhered to their purpose, of inducing or compelling Catharine to restore the conquest. Finding pacific negotiations unavailing, the defensive alliance projected more effectual interference. Having concerted forcible mediation for the security of Europe, his majesty, on the 24th of March, sent a message to both houses, stating his unsuccessful efforts for the establishment of peace, and that from the progress of the war, consequences so important might arise, as to render in necessary for this country to be prepared to meet them by an augmentation of our naval force. The message coming under consideration of parliament, Mr. Fox opposed hostile interference on the following grounds: all wars were to Britain unwise,

submitted to parliament.

Mr. Fox opposes hostilities with Russia.

p See State Papers, and Segur's history of Frederic William.

as well as unjust, that did not originate in self defence. Too much latitude was given to the construction of defensive alliances, and treaties comprehended under that denomination had at present a very offensive tendency. By including in the objects of defensive resistance not only actual, and even probable, but possible injury, the professed defenders of Europe proposed to carry on war whenever they thought it expedient to any of the confederates. We had received no injury from Russia that could justify hostilities: her demands upon Turkey could not so materially affect Great Britain as to render a bloody and expensive war prudent to prevent their attainment: expediency as well as justice, forbade war with a power which neither directly attacked Britain, nor pursued any other object by which she could be endangered: the present plan of ministers tended merely to second the ambitious policy of Prussia, in whose intrigues and projects we were lately become too much involved: Was the protection of a barren district in the barbarous recesses of Tartary, a reason for exposing Great Britain to the evils of war? Was our trade with Russia, which employed eight hundred and fifty ships, trained in that hardening service thousands of seamen, afforded materials for our manufactures to the amount of two millions sterling, received our manufactured goods of more than a million, and yielded two hundred thousand pounds to our revenue, to be all foregone for the sake of a Turkish fortress? Even were Russia to succeed in conquering Turkey, instead of becoming more formidable to her neighbours, she would become weaker, and spread over a more extensive surface. Could wisdom and policy justify Britain in going to war, for preserving an empire inhabited by a barbarous and savage race, habitually connected with our rival; a race that for the sake of religion, humanity, civilization, and commerce, ought to be exterminated from the continent of Europe.[q]

Arguments of Mr. Pitt on the importance of Oczakow.

MINISTERS argued that the aggrandizement of Russia, and the depression of Turkey, would injure both our commercial and political interests. While Russia was confined to the Baltic, her naval exertions would be in-

q See parliamentary reports, 1791.

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considerable; but if her fleet was suffered to range through the Mediterranean, she would become a great maritime power, and a formidable rival. The possession of Oczacow would facilitate not only the acquisition of Constantinople, but of Alexandria, and all lower Egypt. The object of Britain in opposing Russia was conformable to her general policy in continental interference. Britain had herself no ambitious end to pursue; we had nothing to gain; we wished only to remain as we were; our alliances could only have the tendency of maintaining the balance of power. It was known to Europe, that our principles were pacific.[r] Standing on the high eminence which we occupied, we exerted our power only for the maintenance of peace. It was a glorious distinction for England, that, placed on a pinnacle of prosperity, having in her resources and power such motives to ambition, she exerted her strength not as the disturber, but the protector of her neighbours:[s] this had ever been her character and her principle. In endeavouring to repress Russia, she pursued the same line of conduct which she had always chosen.

Principle of British interference in continental politics.

Hostilities with Russia unpopular through the nation.

War with Russia avoided.

THE supreme director of a free country, and especially of Great Britain, is PUBLIC OPINION. The forcible eloquence of Mr. Fox, coinciding with the immediate interests of merchants and manufacturers, impressed those bodies of men very powerfully. Their sentiments were rapidly and widely diffused through the nation, and rendered the people in general inimical to a Russian war. Ministers, feeling the due and constitutional reverence for the voice of the people, sacrificed their own counsels and measures to dictates so deservedly authoritative. Although Britain was thus prevented from compelling Russia to restore the key of Turkey, yet it was the energy of the defensive alliance which induced Catharine to relinquish all the other acquisitions of the war.

New constitution of Canada.

THE circumstances of one of our provinces called on parliament to frame a new constitutional code, that required discussions at all times important, but peculiarly mo-

r See speeches of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Grenville. Parliamentary Reports.
s Speech of Mr. Grenville.

mentous when they were combined with the questions which from the French revolution agitated the public mind. After the acquisition of Canada, a proclamation, as we have seen,[t] had been issued by his majesty, promising that measures should be adopted for extending to that country the benefit of the British constitution. Encouraged by this assurance, many British subjects had settled in the new province; and in consequence of the American revolution, great numbers of royalists had emigrated into a country so near to their own, and which contained inhabitants of congenial principles and sentiments; these readily coalesced with the British settlers, and joined them in frequent applications to remind government of the royal promise. The native Canadians readily admitted the excellence of the British constitution; but deprecated its unqualified extension to themselves, as tending to interfere with privileges which they had inherited from their ancestors. The Canadian noblesse, especially, enjoyed many feudal rights and immunities, which they feared the introduction of a new form of government might infringe or abolish. The minister, considering the diversity of character, sentiment, customs, and privileges, between the French Canadians on the one hand, the British and Anglo-American colonists on the other, proposed a separate legislature to each, that might be best suited to their respective interests, and social situation. With this view he purposed to divide Canada into two distinct provinces, upper and lower; and introduced a bill for this arrangement, and for the establishment of distinct legislatures. The division was to separate the parts which were chiefly inhabited by French Canadians, from recent settlers. For each of the provinces, a legislative council was to be hereditary, or for life, at the option of the king; and a provincial assembly was to be chosen by freeholders possessing lands worth forty shillings of yearly rent, or renters of houses paying ten pounds in six months. The provincial parliament was to be septennial, to assemble at least once in a year: the governor, representing the sovereign, might refuse his sanction to any proposed law, until the

t See vol. i.

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declares the British constitution the best for this country;

lative, and depended on the situation, sentiments, and habits of the people :[x] the British constitution he thought the best and fittest for this country, and would to the utmost of his power oppose republicanism among Britons; but it was contrary to sound logic to infer, that because British liberty was most effectually secured by a government of three estates, therefore such an arrangement must be the fittest for France. He considered the late great change as the precursor of freedom and happiness to twenty-five millions, and therefore rejoiced at its success.

quotes Mr. Burke's speeches and writings favourable to liberty.

From Mr. Burke himself he derived those principles, and imbibed those sentiments which Mr. Burke now censured: he quoted various passages from the speeches and writings of that eloquent and philosophical senator, and referred to measures which he had either proposed or promoted, and comparing them with the sentiments now or recently delivered, endeavoured to fix on him a charge of inconsistency.

Rupture between these friends and their final separation.

Mr. Burke complained of this allegation, and declared it to be unfounded: his opinions on government, he said, had been the same during all his political life. His conduct would evince the truth of his assertions: his friendship with Mr. Fox was now at an end; deep must be his impression of truths which caused such a sacrifice to the safety of his country; he gave up private friendship and party support, and separated from those he esteemed most highly. His country, he trusted, would measure the sincerity of his avowals, and the importance of his warnings, by the price which they had cost himself. He was far from imputing to Mr. Fox a wish for the practical adoption in this country of the revolutionary doctrines; but thinking and feeling as Mr. Fox and he now did, their intercourse must terminate. With great emotion Mr. Fox deprecated the renunciation of Mr. Burke's friendship; and tears for several minutes interrupted his utterance.[y] When the first ebullitions of sensibility had subsided, he expressed the highest esteem, affection, and grati-

x These observations are conformable to Aristotle, as the English reader will see in his Politics, translated by Dr. Gillies, book iv.

y This account is chiefly compressed from parliamentary debates, and partly taken from a gentleman who was present.

tude for Mr. Burke, whom, notwithstanding his harshness, he must still continue to love. Proceeding for some time in a strain of plaintive tenderness, he gradually recovered his usual firmness, and afterwards contracted no small degree of severity, when having vindicated the resistance of France, on whig principles he renewed his charge of inconsistency against Mr. Burke for deviating from those principles. This repetition of the charge of inconsistency, prevented the impression which the affectionate and respectful language and behaviour, and the conciliatory apologies might have probably made: the breach was irreparable; and from this time Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke never resumed their former friendship. In this discussion the impartial examiner cannot find a single sentence, or even phrase, of Mr. Fox, which was not highly favourable to the British constitution; so that the political difference between these illustrious men, arose entirely from their opposite apprehensions concerning the French revolution, which hitherto was to a British senator a question of speculative reasoning, and not of practical contention; but Burke had already conceived such an abhorrence of the Gallic system, that he could not bear any expression of approbation respecting a change which he deemed destructive to the best interests of society.

Question whether impeachment by the commons before the lords abate with the dissolution of parliament.

Precedents and arguments for and against

WITH colonial policy, parliament this year considered also important questions of domestic law. One of these arose from the trial of Mr. Hastings: it was doubted whether an impeachment brought by the commons of England abated by the dissolution of parliament. Several members of high note in the profession of the law, and among the rest sir John Scott, the solicitor general, were of opinion, that the renewal of the impeachment was neither justified by law, precedent, nor equity. It was a question, they said, concerning which there was no statute; we must therefore be governed by the law of parliament, that is by the orders of the lords, and by usage. The lords in 1678, had affirmed, that dissolution did not preclude the renewal of an impeachment; but that order was not sanctioned by former practice. They had suffered the impeachment of lords Danby and Stafford to proceed from the stage in which they had been left by the old parlia-

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ment ; but at that time the nation was in a ferment about the popish plot ; detested Stafford as a catholic, and execrated Danby as the supposed promoter of arbitrary power and a connexion between the king and Lewis XIV. Both peers and commons were seized with the same enthusiasm against popery and France, and under its influence continued the impeachment, contrary to law and usage. From these cases, therefore, which were peculiarly circumstanced, no precedent could be drawn. In 1685 lord Danby was by the house of lords freed from the impeachment, which in fact reversed the precedent of 1678. Lords Salisbury and Peterborough being accused of high treason, pleaded a dissolution, and in 1690 were liberated. On the same grounds the lords Somers and Halifax, sir Adam Blair, and others were released. To support their position, they also adduced several analogies, and concluded with arguments from equity : by continuation of an impeachment the accusers might be changed, and even not a few of the judges. If a trial is to last beyond one parliament, may it not be prolonged to an indefinite term, or even during life : a court of justice should be free from bias and prejudice ; but how could this be the case with a tribunal in which there were so many new judges ; and some of them even accusers from the lower house. The supporters of continued impeachment reasoned in the following manner. If the alleged precedents existed, they would be extremely prejudicial, because they would enable the sovereign to save a favourite servant, and to defeat the purposes of national justice ; and it would become the legislature speedily to remedy such an evil, by a law enacted for the purpose. This remedy, however, could only be applied to future cases, without including present or past ; but such a series of usages does not exist.[z] There is no evidence of parliamentary practice to justify the cessation of a trial before the truth or falsehood of the charges be ascertained. Parliamentary records demonstrate that in ancient times impeachments were continued after dissolution. But without searching into remote monuments, in the reign of Charles II, in 1673, when there

z See speeches of Mr. Pitt and of Mr. Fox.

was no ferment either on the one side or the other, the house of lords declared their writs of error, petitions of appeal, and other judicial proceedings, should be narrowed as to the portion of time which they were to occupy during a session, but should extend from parliament to parliament, if they were not decided. The reason of this order evidently was, that on the one hand judicial proceedings might not employ any part of the time which was required by legislative, on the other, that the objects either of civil or criminal justice might not be defeated by discontinuance of process. The precedents, it was contended, did not apply: and in the various cases alleged, the proceedings had been discontinued by a general pardon, admission to bail, or some other cause, and not from the dissolution of parliament. These positions their supporters endeavoured to evince by a consideration of the very cases that were quoted by the advocates of the opposite doctrine. They further argued, that decisions of courts of law, and the authority of judges, with few exceptions, sanctioned the same opinion; and cited cases to prove their position: the general analogy of judicial proceedings illustrated the conformity of their conception of the law of parliament with the established modes of process before subordinate tribunals: the commons are the public prosecutors, and in this respect analogous to the attorney or solicitor general in ordinary cases of criminal prosecutions. The removal of an attorney general does not quash an information or indictment; and the process is carried on by his successor. The public prosecutors before the house of peers, are the successive houses of commons, as before the inferior courts, they are the successive attorneys general. The house of peers are the judges in causes carried on at the instance of the house of commons; the peers may be not all the same in successive parliaments, as the judges of the inferior courts may be changed while the trial is pending. Equity and expediency coincide with analogy; impeachments are calculated for bringing to condign punishment criminals too exalted for the inferior courts; criminals, who to secure themselves or their friends from all responsibility as ministers of the crown, might advise a dissolution, as often as it should be required for

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their safety. Hence parliament would be no longer able to control either the civil or judicial administration of the kingdom. The cabinet and courts of law would remain equally without a check; it is therefore clear from the weight of precedents, the authority of the greatest luminaries of the law, the principles of the constitution, the analogy of public trials, the immutable rules of equal justice, and the dictates of expediency and common sense, that impeachments continue notwithstanding the dissolution of parliament. On these grounds a great majority in both houses voted that the impeachment of Warren Hastings was still depending.

Determination of the house, that impeachments do not abate by dissolution.

Liberty of the press.

An inquiry concerning the judicial power of parliament was soon followed by a discussion of the powers of juries. One of the chief engines of that moral and political knowledge, of those sentiments and privileges of rational and beneficial liberty which prevail in Britain, is a FREE PRESS. By this vehicle a writer may communicate to the public his observations, thoughts, and feelings, and according to his talents, learning and dispositions, may inform and instruct mankind: and thus the press bestows all the knowledge and wisdom which cannot be imparted by oral delivery. But as all persons who address the public through this vehicle are not both capable and disposed to inform and instruct society, an instrument of general good is frequently productive of considerable, though partial evil. The liberty of the press has often permitted, seditious, treasonable, immoral, and blasphemous libels; and generated mischiefs that were followed by very pernicious consequences. For a considerable time after the invention of printing, government possessed the means of preventing noxious publications, as the press was liable to the inspection of a licenser; but the preventive was much worse than the evil; and the subjection of writings to a previous examination being found totally incompatible with the purposes of beneficial freedom, ceased soon after the revolution. Precluded by the law from preventing the publication of hurtful works, certain judges endeavoured to deter writers by increasing the punishment: to avoid one extreme running into its opposite, they attempted to attach

criminality to productions, that before would have been reckoned innocent; and to supply the supposed deficiency of preventive justice, they tried to enlarge the precincts of penal law. They also endeavoured to change the judicial rules established by the constitution. For a series of years it had been maintained by very high legal authority, as we have already seen,[a] that the truth of an allegation could not be pleaded in bar of an indictment for a libel, and also that in cases of libel juries were to investigate the fact only; to return a verdict relative to the proof of the allegations, but to leave the criminality to the judge; and though these doctrines had been questioned by very high legal authority,[b] yet they were most frequently followed in recent practice. Various cases occurred in which guilt had been found on grounds, that in the popular estimation were inadequate, or punishment had far exceeded the criminalty that was evinced. Mr. Fox having adopted the same sentiments respecting some late decisions, and disapproving of the interposition of crown lawyers, introduced a bill declaring the power of the juries to decide upon the law as well as the fact in trials of libels. Where any special matter of law is pleaded (said Mr. Fox) the judge and not the jury is to decide; but where a general issue is joined, and the law is so implicated with the fact that they cannot be separated, the jury must, as in all other criminal processes, bring in a general verdict of guilty or not guilty. The decision of this important question greatly depended on the import of the word *meaning*, used in all indictments for libels. The different senses annexed to this term Mr. Fox explained, and marked with discriminating precision. The term to *mean* might, he observed, be understood to imply a proposition according to strict *grammatical and logical construction*, or to express the MORAL INTENTION of a writer or speaker. In the former sense it had been received for many years by judges and crown lawyers; in the latter it ought to be interpreted by a candid and impartial English jury, who were to investigate the intention of the accused, as a part of the fact to be proved or disproved. It is the

Motion of Mr. Fox for ascertaining and declaring the law of libels, and bill for that purpose. Arguments for and against.

a See vol. i. c. ix. b See vol. i. c. ix.

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intention that must constitute guilt, if any guilt existed The bill was opposed as an innovation on the laws of the kingdom, that was agitated at present by the dangerous maxims which were embroiling our neighbours. In such circumstances we ought to avoid novelties, civil and political. The present process had been the practice for a long course of years, without producing any oppression to the subject; the judges were independent of the crown, and could have no motive to unfair and partial decisions. This bill was not debated as a party question, but as a subject of existing law, justice and constitutional right. Mr. Pitt was no less vigorous in its support than Mr. Fox, or Mr. Erskine. In the house of lords, lord Grenville supported the motion with no less zeal than lord Loughborough, and lord Camden took the lead in promoting its success. After passing the commons by a great majority, it was rejected by the peers; but the following session, being again proposed it passed into a law.

Postponed for the present; is afterwards passed into a law.

Mr. Fox also proposed a law for depriving the attorney general in right of the crown, and every other person in his own right, of a power to disturb the possessor of a franchise in a corporation, after having quietly exercised it for six years. The end of this proposition was, to secure the rights of election, and prevent vexatious prosecutions for political purposes: the bill was passed into a law.

State and conduct of the English catholics.

Parliament, endeavouring to remove all restrictions upon natural freedom, as far as was consistent with security, directed its attention to the catholics. The English catholics were now totally changed, and no longer resembled the Romanists of the seventeenth century; nor even those who, at a later period, wished to exalt a popish pretender to the throne. They were now quiet and peaceable subjects, friends to the present government, and favourable to our constitution of church and state, which was so mild and tolerant to every religious sect that worshipped God according to their own conscience, without disturbing the public tranquillity. Many of the catholics, as they mingled with protestants, imbibed a great share of their mildness and moderation; and, without relinquishing the sensible rituals, prescribed observances, or the

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metaphysical theology of the popish church, were really protestants in their moral and political principles and conduct. A considerable body of them had recently protested in express terms against doctrines imputed for near three centuries to papists. They denied the authority of the pope in temporal concerns, his right to excommunicate princes, and to absolve their subjects from their oaths of allegiance. They disavowed the lawfulness of breaking faith with heretics; and denied that any clerical power could exempt man from moral obligations. The penal laws against catholics arising from circumstances and conduct so totally different from the present, were still extremely severe. To render the law more suitable to their present sentiments and character, Mr. Mitford proposed to repeal the statutes in question, so far as to exempt from their penal operations those who had renounced the hurtful doctrines abovementioned, under the denomination of the PROTESTING CATHOLIC DISSENTERS, upon these catholics taking an oath conformable to the protest. The principle of the bill was generally approved; and the bench of bishops displayed the most liberal zeal in its favour. Dr. Horseley especially exerted his great abilities, not only in promoting its success, but in removing a clause which was neither agreeable to its principles nor conducive to its objects. In the proposed oath, the doctrine that princes excommunicated by the pope might be deposed and murdered by their subjects, was declared to be impious, heretical, and damnable. The catholics felt no reluctance to express their own rejection and disapprobation of such doctrine; but from scruples founded on a tender regard for the memory of their progenitors, they could not induce themselves to brand it with the terms which the oath prescribed. To remove this objection, he proposed the oath which had been adopted in 1778: this alteration was admitted, and the bill was passed into a law.

They renounce the most dangerous moral and political doctrines of popery.

Motion for their relief;

modified and corrected by Dr. Horseley, it is passed into a law.

THE church of Scotland perceiving a disposition in parliament to grant relief to nonconformists, transmitted from the general assembly a petition praying for the repeal of the test act as far as it applied to Scotland; and on the 10th of May sir Gilbert Elliot made a motion conformably to the petition. The supporters of the motion

Petition of the church of Scotland respecting the test act,

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endeavoured to prove that the law, as it now stood, was inconsistent with the articles of the union. Scotland, by her constitution, and by treaty, had a separate church, and a separate form of religion. By the treaty of union she was to have a free communication of civil rights; but a test which, as a condition for attaining those civil rights, imposed on her a necessity of departing from her own established theology, and submitting to the system of England, either abridged her religious liberty by means of the civil attainments, or obstructed the civil attainments through the religious obligations. When the two kingdoms entered into a treaty of union, being independent nations, they meant to stipulate and contract on terms of perfect equality. Was it not an infringement of that equality, that a Scotchman entering into any British office in England should solemnly profess his attachment to the church of England, which a scrupulous man might deem a dereliction of his native church; while an Englishman appointed to an office in Scotland incurred no similar obligation. The opposers of the motion argued, that the test must have been understood as a stipulation at the time of the union, and had never been represented as an hardship till the present time. The grievance was merely imaginary; the test was not a dereliction of the church of Scotland, but a pledge of amity with the church of England. The general sentiment of members of the Scottish church was affection and respect for the sister establishment: but in Scotland there were, as in England, sectaries of various denominations, whose sentiments were less liberal. Against such sectaries it was just as well as expedient, that the test should operate; otherwise the church of England would incur a danger from them, to which from the sectaries of England she was not exposed. Since there was no test in Scotland, the proposed exemption would let in upon the church of England dissenters and sectaries of every denomination; and thus break down the fence which the wisdom and justice of parliament had so often and so recently confirmed. This petition, in reality, arose ultimately from the English dissenters. These had operated on the church of Scotland by representing themselves as presbyterian brethren. Many of the Scottish clergy-

men, not discovering the total diversity of political sentiments that subsisted between them and many of the English dissenters, were, from supposed religious sympathy, induced to give them their support. The majority of the house being impressed by these arguments, voted against the proposition. CHAP. XLVI. 1791. is rejected.

THE slave trade underwent this year a much more complete discussion than when it was formerly agitated. The facts on both sides had now been very thoroughly examined: there was fulness of information; so that the public and parliament had the amplest means of viewing the subject in every light. Mr. Wilberforce, on the 18th of April, proposed a bill for preventing the farther importation of slaves into the British colonies in the West Indies. In his prefatory speech he considered, as he had done two years before, first humanity, and secondly policy. He traced the condition of the Africans from their native country to the West India plantations; and, according to the information which he had collected, in more copious detail, with more numerous instances, repeated his former statements of the causes of slavery, the treatment of the negroes on their passage, and their sufferings under the planters. On the ground of policy he strongly argued that the abolition of the slave trade was expedient for the West India planters and the British nation. Compelled to promote multiplication among the slaves, the planters would soon find that their present negroes, in a climate so congenial to their native Africa, would, if well treated, people the plantations; and if allowed to acquire some little interest in the soil, would be stimulated to much greater exertions. The loss of seamen which Britons sustained in the negro trade was immense. From Liverpool, in one year, three hundred and fifty ships, having on board twelve thousand two hundred and fifty men, lost two thousand four hundred and fifty, being one-fifth. The commercial profits were to be totally disregarded, when acquired by such a violation of humanity, and at the expense of so many valuable lives of British sailors.

Full discussion of the slave trade.

Motion of Mr. Wilberforce for the abolition.

Arguments for and against it.

THE continuance of this trade was defended on the ground of justice, policy, and even humanity. Slavery had been established time immemorial in various parts of

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the earth, especially in Africa and the adjacent countries. So far was it from being reckoned a crime, that the Old Testament frequently mentions male and female slaves under the names of bondsmen, handmaids, and others of similar import, and never censures mancipation, but speaks of all its offices as just employments. The characters held up to imitation had slaves themselves, and endeavoured to acquire slaves to others.[e] The habits and sentiments of Africans render this condition by no means so grievous to them as it would be to people unaccustomed to the daily contemplation of slavery. The assertion of the abolitionists, that the hope of acquiring prisoners to be sold to Europeans is the chief cause of war, is far from being generally true. Wars in Africa, as well as wars in Europe, arise from pride, resentment, envy, jealousy, emulation, ambition, and other passions, besides avarice alone. As an accurate knowledge of the interior country increased, it was more clearly comprehended that captives, though a consequence of war, were far from being its most frequent objects. The purchaser of slaves taken in war preserves the lives of captives that would be otherwise butchered. Their ferocious conquerors would give way to the savage gratification of rage and cruelty, if the thirst of blood were not changed into the thirst of gain. The extreme indolence of the Africans, notwithstanding the fertility and even spontaneous productiveness of the soil, renders their supplies of the necessaries of life very scanty. Prisoners taken in war, therefore, are great burdens upon the captors; and unless there was a market for vending them, they would be immediately massacred, not merely from cruelty, but from the savage economy of those barbarians; and the European traders saved many a life. Our merchants, on the faith of parliament, had embarked property to a great amount in this trade; the total loss of which would immediately follow the abolition. The legislature had invited them to engage in the traffic,

e Joseph, a patriarch so highly favoured by God, when he became prime minister to Pharoah in consequence of the foresight conferred on him by the divine gift, having laid up stores of provisions against the season of scarcity, purchased with the king's corn the liberties of his subjects; and nothing in this procedure is blamed by the sacred historian. It appeared, indeed, perfectly fair and reasonable to the subjects of an African prince.

that Britain might be furnished from their plantations with those commodities which habit has now rendered universally necessary, and if not supplied by them, must be purchased from other countries. It invited them also to engage in this commerce, that the carriage of their productions might rear up a navy; yet now, when they have a capital of seventy millions embarked, when several islands lately occupied, and therefore thinly peopled, require a constant succession of fresh supplies; and when twenty millions of debt in mortgages and deeds of consignment, press heavily on the West India proprietors, the abolition is proposed in contradiction to so many acts of parliament, and without compensation of the only means by which they can be relieved from the enormous load. Is it consistent with British justice to depreciate, and even destroy property, engaged in a commerce which the legislature pledged itself to protect, and repeatedly declared its disposition to improve? But private property would not alone be affected; from this trade the revenue would suffer a very material diminution. The evidences adduced to prove the horrid cruelties practised upon slaves were represented to be in some instances false, in many partial, in almost all exaggerated. It is the interest both of the transporting owners of slaves, and their purchasers in the West Indies, to treat them humanely, and easy to devise regulations for enforcing this treatment, and punishing the contrary. But were Britain from an impulse of benevolent enthusiasm to abolish the slave trade, under a supposition that it subjected the Africans to the most poignant misery, would not other European nations engaged in the trade, supply the vacancy left by our relinquishment of a traffic necessary for raising commodities naturalized to the European palates? Would the purchasers, the venders, or the subjects sold, be less numerous? Would fewer slaves be exported from Africa? Respecting the effects of this commerce on our navy, the friends of the abolition were totally misinformed. A naval commander of the very highest eminence, lord Rodney, had declared that the power of obtaining from Guinea ships, so numerous a body of men inured to the climate, whenever we wished

Continuance of the slave trade defended on the grounds of humanity, justice, and expediency.

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to send a fleet to the West Indies on the breaking out of a war, was, in his opinion, a consideration of great moment. His lordship's opinion was illustrated, and his authority confirmed, by concurring testimonies of other officers, both of the army and navy. The abolition would be equally contrary to the commercial and political interests of the public, as to the rights and well founded expectations of private individuals. On this question messrs. Pitt and Fox took the same side, and supported the abolition with every argument that genius could invent; but their united eloquence was not effectual: on a division it was carried in the negative by a majority of one hundred and sixty-three to eighty-eight. The benevolent spirit which prompted the abolition of the slave trade directly, produced an attempt gradually to demonstrate its inefficacy and inutility. For this purpose an institution was projected to try an experiment whether Africa could not be civilized, and rendered more beneficial to herself and to Europe, than as a nursery for slaves. Mr. Dawes, who had long resided at Sierra Leone, on the coast of Africa, in the eighth degree of north latitude, asserted that the soil is excellent, and would produce cotton, coffee, and sugar, with the slightest cultivation. There was a society proposed to establish a colony in Africa, for effecting the desired change in the character and condition of the Africans. A bill for the establishment of such a company was introduced by Mr. Henry Thornton, and passed through both houses without opposition.

Previous to the reduction of his financial plan, Mr. Pitt proposed to appoint a committee to consider and report the amount of the public income and expenditure during the last five years; also, to inquire what they might respectively be in future, and what alterations had taken place in the amount of the national debt since January 5th, 1786. The report stated that the annual income, on the average of the three last years, was sixteen millions, eighty thousand, two hundred and eighty-six pounds; and the annual expenditure fifteen millions, nine hundred and sixty-nine thousand, one hundred and seventy-eight pounds, including the annual million for liquidating the national debt: the balance, therefore, in favour of the country, was

sixty-one thousand one hundred and eight pounds.[d] Mr. Sheridan, as usual, took the lead in combatting the financial conclusions of Mr. Pitt, and moved no less than forty resolutions, which were intended to show that the past revenue had been considerably inferior to ministerial calculations: and that in calculating the future income, the minister had overlooked contingencies which recent experience demonstrated to be probable. The greater number of these propositions were negatived, and others were amended. Various resolutions were framed by ministers, confirming, in detail, the report of the new committee, and maintaining the calculations which were founded on their inquiry. The supplies were nearly the same as in the usual peace establishment, and no fresh taxes were imposed. Mr. Dundas produced his annual statement of Indian finance, which had been in a state of so progressive prosperity ever since the establishment of Mr. Pitt's plan of territorial government, and the commencement of Mr. Dundas's executive direction. It appeared from the documents which he presented, that the British revenues in the East Indies, amounting to seven millions, after defraying all the expenses of government, left a clear surplus of near a million and a half, either to be laid out in investments, or applied to contingent services. Among the pecuniary grants of this year was an annuity of twelve thousand pounds, bestowed on his majesty's third son prince William Henry, created about two years before duke of Clarence.

Supplies.

Indian finance.

THIS year the prosecution of Mr. Hastings closed its evidence (May 30). The managers proposed an address to the king, praying him not to prorogue the parliament until the trial was finished; but this address was negatived. Mr. Hastings, when the prosecution was closed, addressed the court in a speech of singular acuteness, force, and eloquence, exhibiting his view of the result of the prosecutor's evidence, contrasting the situation in which he found with the situation in which he left British India;

Trial of Hastings. The evidence for the prosecution closed.

d 16,030,286
15,969,178
61,108*l.*

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explicitly, but not arrogantly, detailing the counsels and conduct by which he had effected these great ends: he appealed to the commons, his accusers, in the following dignified and striking peroration. "To the commons of "England, in whose name I am arraigned for desolating "the provinces of their dominions in India, I dare to "reply, that they are, and their representatives persist in "telling them so, the most flourishing of all the states of "India. It was I that made them so: the value of what "others acquired I enlarged, and gave shape and consist-"ency to the dominions which you hold there: I pre-"served it: I sent forth its armies with an effectual but "economical hand, through unknown and hostile regions, "to the support of your other possessions; to the retrieval "of one from degradation and dishonour, and of another "from utter loss and subjection. I maintained the wars "which were of your formation, or that of others, not of "mine: I won one member of the great Indian confeder-"acy from it by an act of seasonable restitution; with "another I maintained a secret intercourse, and converted "him into a friend: a third I drew off by diversion and "negotiation, and employed him as the instrument of "peace. I gave you all, and you have rewarded me with "confiscation, disgrace, and a life of impeachment." Of Mr. Hastings's hearers, even those who could not admit a plea of merit as an abatement of special charges, were very forcibly impressed by this energetic representation. The defence of the accused was, by the direction of the court, postponed till the following session, and on June 10th the parliament was prorogued.

Impressive speech of the defendant.

Session rises.

CHAP. XLVII.

Peace between Russia and Turkey—on moderate terms.—Reasons of Catharine's apparent moderation.—Poland attempts to recover liberty and independence.—Wise, moderate, and patriotic efforts for that purpose.—New constitution, an hereditary, mixed, and limited monarchy —effected without bloodshed.—Rage of Catharine at the emancipation of Poland.—She hopes to crush the new system of Poland.—Impression made by the French revolution on other countries—on sovereigns.—Circular letter of the emperor to other princes.—Equitable and prudent principle of British policy respecting the French revolution.—Paris—ejectment and banishment of the clergy who refused the civic oath.—Progress of confiscation.—Forfeiture of the estates of emigrants.—Abolition of Primogeniture.—Invasion of the rights of German princes.—The emperor remonstrates against this violation of national engagements.—Proposed jaunt of the king to St. Cloud—is prevented by the populace.—Memorial of Lewis delivered to foreign powers.—Flight of the king.—He is arrested at Varennes.—Proceedings of the legislature during his absence.—He is brought back to Paris.—The monarchical party adopts a vigorous system, but too late.—State of parties.—The king's friends advise him to accept the constitutional code.—He accepts it in the national assembly.—Honours paid to infidel philosophers.—Want of money.—Inspection of accounts.—Dissolution af the national assembly.—Review of the principal changes effected by this body.—How it found and left France.—In all its excesses it manifested the genius and energy of the French character.—Progress of political enthusiasm.—Britain.—Certain ingenious visionaries expect a political millennium.—Thomas Paine. —Rights of man.—Dextrous adaptation of to the sentiments and passions of the vulgar—astonishing popularity of among the lower ranks.—Commemoration of the

French revolution at Birmingham.—Riots.—Destruction of Dr. Priestley's library—the doctor's conduct.—Comparison between Priestley and Paine.—Rapid and extensive diffusion of democratic principles.—Wide diffusion of superficial literature—favourable to revolutionary projects.—Mary Anne Wollstonecroft.—Debating societies.—Cheap edition of Tom Paine's works.—One able and profound work in favour of the French revolution.—Vindiciæ Gallicia.—Marriage of the duke of York to the princess of Prussia.

CHAP. XLVII.

1791. Peace between Russia and Turkey;

CATHARINE perceived her grand object of subjugating the Ottomans, for the present to be impracticable, and now satisfied herself with endeavouring to compel the sultan to a peace, before the interference of the confederates could prevent her from dictating the terms. With this view her armies took the field early in spring, repeatedly defeated the enemy, and compelled them to retire nearer to Constantinople; and to enhance their danger, several symptoms began to appear in Asiatic Turkey of a disposition to revolt: menaced by most imminent perils both in Asia and Europe, and apprised that the cooperation of Prussia and of Britain, was now obstructed, Selim began to listen to the proposals of the empress; the negotiation was not tedious; and a peace was concluded on the 11th of August at Galatz, by which Russia retained Oczakow, and the country between the Bog and the Dnieper, which had belonged to Turkey before the war. The latter of those rivers was to be the boundary of both powers: each to be equally entitled to the free navigation of the river: and each to erect fortifications on its respective shores. However important this acquisition might be to Russia, it was certainly much inferior to the expectations which she entertained at the commencement of the war; and during its successful progress: but other circumstances combined with the exertions of the defensive alliance to induce Catharine to content herself, for the present, with Oczakow and its dependencies. Frederic William agreeably to the general objects of the confederacy, as well as his own particular interest, cultivated the friendship of Poland. Encouraged by their

on moderate terms.

Reasons of Catharine's apparent moderation.

connexion with this powerful prince, and beginning once more to conceive themselves of weight in the scale of Europe, reviving self estimation rekindled in the Poles that courage and patriotism, which though smothered, had not been extinguished; and thus once more they entertained hopes of freeing themselves from the thraldom in which they were held by the imperious Catharine. In 1788 and 1789, various efforts were made to establish the independent interest of Poland in the diet, and to overturn the power which Russia had assumed. A party of generous patriots stimulated their countrymen to emancipate themselves from a foreign yoke; the spirit of liberty was studiously diffused through all classes of the community; and in 1790 had risen very high. Its leading votaries saw, that the only method of securing the attachment and fidelity of the people to those who were projecting such alterations, was to accompany them with such benefits to the middling, and even to the inferior classes, as might deeply interest them in their support. But though desirous of changes, which would terminate the oppressive power of the great, the Poles were sincerely inclined to be satisfied with a moderate degree of freedom; and at present bounded their wishes to deliverance, from the personal thraldom in which, for so many ages, they had been tyrannically held. Conformably to this disposition, the popular leaders exerted their influence, with so much wisdom and prudence among the commons, that they made no claims but those that were strictly equitable and consistent with legal subordination. On these moderate principles of freedom, the people of Poland drew up an address to the diet, amounting to a declaration of rights. This representation, instead of recurring to the *natural rights of man*, antecedent to political establishment, considered *what was most expedient for the character and circumstances of the Polish people.* The constitution of Poland having been extremely defective in various constituents of liberty and security, the address in its claims, proposed such changes only as would remedy the defects, without subverting the existing orders. The nobles, clergy, and commons, should continue distinct, and the nobility retain their rank, dignity, and all the privileges which were compatible with public freedom; they should

Poland attempts to recover liberty and independence;

wise and moderate part of the efforts for that purpose.

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only be deprived of the power of oppression and tyranny. The commons should not only be exempted from civil thraldom, but have all the political power that was consistent with the balance of the estates. Requisitions so discriminately moderate, tending to produce the balance of the parts, as well as the welfare of the whole, were most graciously received by the Polish nobility, who showed themselves desirous of promoting a new system, conformable to the wishes of the people. The Polish patriots were eager to complete their reform, before Russia should be in a condition to give them any effectual interruption. Reports were spread and suspicions entertained, that there was a new partition in contemplation: the only way to prevent such a calamity and disgrace, was without delay to establish a system of polity, which should produce an union of the whole strength and energy of the Polish nation, resist the interference of foreigners in its domestic affairs, and preserve its natural independence and dignity. With these views the patriots formed a system, which had for its basis, the rights claimed in the address of the people; and they presented their plan to the diet at Warsaw. The new constitution proposed two objects; the external independence, and internal liberty of the nation. The Roman catholic religion was to continue to be the national faith, with a toleration of every other which should peaceably submit to the established government. The clergy should retain their privileges and authority; the nobility their preeminence and prerogatives; the commons including the citizens and peasants, should participate of the general liberty; and the peasants were to be exempted from the predial servitude, under which they had so long groaned. Stipulations between the landholders and the peasants should be equally binding on both parties and on their respective successors, either by inheritance or acquisition: all property of every rank, order, or individual should be sacred, even from the encroachments of the supreme national power. To encourage the population of the country, all people, either strangers who should come to settle, or natives who having emigrated should return to their country, might become citizens of Poland, on conforming to its laws. The constitution should be composed of three

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distinct powers, the legislative power in the states assembled; executive power in the king and council; and judicial power in the jurisdictions existing, or to be established. The crown was declared to be elective in point of families, but hereditary in the family which should be chosen. The proposed dynasty of future kings, was to begin with the elector of Saxony, and to descend to his heirs. The king at his accession must engage to support the new constitution, and was to command the army, and preside in the legislature: the legislation was to be vested in two houses, the nobility and commons, meeting by their representatives; and the judicial power was to be vested in a gradation of courts, rising to one general and national tribunal. Such are the outlines[e] of the constitution of Poland, which appeared to steer a middle course between aristocratic tyranny, and democratic violence. It seemed well calculated to maintain internal liberty, encourage the industry of the great mass of the people, improve the immense advantages of their soil and situation, and invigorate their energy by the newly infused spirit of personal freedom; to confirm subordination of rank, which best guides the efforts of the people, and by diffusing harmony and force throughout the nation, to afford the disposition and means of maintaining the independence of Poland. There were members of the diet who not only opposed these proceedings, but drew up a protest against them in the form of a manifesto. Their conduct excited universal dissatisfaction, and though the moderation of the patriotic party offered no insult to their persons, yet the people could not forbear to view them with indignation. The king and the other leaders of the popular party were extremely vigilant in restraining every appearance of violence. Indeed a singular and happy circumstance of this revolution, was the peaceable manner in which it was effected: Poland attained the end which it proposed, without the loss of a single life. In framing this system, Stanislaus himself had displayed great ability: he had consulted the English and American constitutions, and with acute discrimination had selected such parts as were best adapted

New constitution, an hereditary, mixed, and limited monarchy:

effected without bloodshed.

e See Otridge's Annual Register for 1791. Appendix to Chronicle, p. 88.

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to the circumstances of Poland. The Polish patriots aware of the dispositions of Catharine, and apprehending other neighbouring states to regard the project with a jealous eye, urged the speedy adoption of the new constitution; and they exerted themselves so strenuously, that on the 3d of May 1791, it was accepted by the estates, and all orders and classes of men, and ratified by suitable oaths, and inaugural solemnities.

Rage of Catharine at the emancipation of Poland.

THE situation of Poland, freed from the Russian yoke, and rising to independence and respectability, galled the pride, and alarmed the ambition of Catharine; she was enraged, that the Poles, over whom she for many years had imperiously domineered, now asserted a right of managing their own affairs: she saw in the power of Poland, if allowed to be confirmed, under her present constitution, a bar to the accomplishment of her vast projects: she was therefore eager to conclude the peace of Galatz, on terms less humiliating to the vanquished Ottoman, than from her successes she might have expected.

She hopes to crush the new system of Poland.

THERE were circumstances which afforded her hopes of not only resuming her dictation in Poland, but also rendering her power over that country more arbitrary than ever.

AT the commencement of the French revolution, the other great powers of the continent were so much engaged in their own several projects, as not to bestow an adequate attention on the character and spirit of the Gallic proceedings. Spain was by far too feeble to entertain any hopes of interfering with effect in favour of fallen monarchy. The king of Sardinia afforded refuge to the exiled princes and nobility, but could supply no important aid. The refugee princes and their party, though anxiously eager to interest foreign powers in the cause of the privileged orders, yet during the year 1790, had little success; but when Leopold had restored tranquillity in the Low Countries, after having concluded peace with Turkey, and being on terms of amity with the defensive alliance, he turned his attention[f] to the situation of France. Though moved by consanguinity, he was yet more deeply impressed by kingly

Impression made by the French revolution on other countries;

on sovereigns.

f See Annual Register, 1791, ch. iv.

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sympathy: he considered the present ruling party in France as inimical to all monarchy, and holding up an example which he apprehended the subjects of neighbouring sovereigns might imitate: and in these sentiments other princes of Germany coincided. Leopold however was aware of the danger which would attend speedy hostilities, unless he should have more effectual auxiliaries than the petty princes of the Germanic empire. His own resources were impaired by the war from which he had so recently extricated himself. France under her monarchical government had been always too powerful for the German empire; the present system would afford her additional energy. From these considerations, so early as the spring of 1791, he endeavoured to interest other potentates in his objects; and with his own hand[g] wrote a letter to the empress of Russia, the king of England, and the king of Prussia, also to the king of Spain, the states general, the kings of Sardinia and Naples; proposing to form an union and concert of counsels and plans, for the purposes of asserting the honour and liberty of the king and royal family of France, and setting bounds to the dangerous excesses of the French revolution; to instruct their ministers at Paris to declare the concert which should be so formed; and recommend to the respective princes to support their declarations, by preparing a sufficient force. Should the French refuse to comply with the joint requisition of the crowned heads, the confederated powers would suspend all intercourse with France, collect a considerable army on the frontiers, and thereby compel the national assembly to raise and maintain a great military force at a heavy expense. The interruption of trade, and general industry, would bring the people of France to more sober thoughts; and might tend to the evaporation of their present enthusiasm. On so great an undertaking, the emperor could not venture alone; the concurrence of the other great powers, especially Prussia and Great Britain, was necessary to give efficacy to the project.

Circular letter of the emperor to other princes.

WHATEVER effect this application might have on the powers severally, to whom it was addressed, it did not

g Annual Register as above.

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Equitable and prudent principle of British policy respecting the French revolution.

succeed in producing the proposed concert. The principle of Britain manifested not only in her declarations, but uniform conduct, was that an internal change in the political system of any country did not justify the interference of neighbouring nations, unless that internal change led its votaries to aggression: that it did not belong to England to determine whether the government of France should be monarchical or republican; and that in changing her constitution, humbling her monarch, degrading her nobility, plundering her church, and even committing various acts of atrocity, in her own provinces or metropolis, she did no act which it belonged to Britain to avenge: she inflicted no injury on Britain. As impartial observers, Britons might individually censure French proceedings, as unwise, unjust, or impious; but the British nation neither possessed nor asserted a right of dictation to the French concerning the management of their own internal affairs, so long as their conduct did not produce aggression against this country.

Persecutement and banishment of the clergy who refused the civic oath.

While symptoms of enmity against the French revolution were manifesting themselves in some of the neighbouring countries, its votaries were proceeding in their career. With great expedition they ejected from their livings the refractory priests who would not swear contrary to their belief and conscience, and filled their places with more complaisant pastors, who were willing to submit to the powers that be; and in a few months there was a new set of spiritual teachers, most eagerly attached to the revolution to which they were indebted for their benefices. Besides this body of staunch auxiliaries, the national assembly, by robbing the church, procured another set of very active assistants in the holders of the assignments. These were, indeed, a kind of revolutionary pawnbrokers, who advanced money on plundered effects, and depended on the stability of the new system for payment. By the spiritual influence of the new priests, and the temporal influence of the new brokers, who consisted of great moneyed capitalists, the people became still more attached to the revolution, and its engine the national assembly. This body of legislators, finding confiscation so ...ctive a source of revenue, deemed it unwise to

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confine it to the property of the church. A new fund they provided in the estates of the refugee princes and nobility;[h] and with their usual despatch they passed a decree sequestering the principal estates, and threatening to confiscate them all if the proprietors did not immediately return. Farther to equalise property, they passed a decree abolishing primogeniture, and ordaining that the property of parents should be equally divided among their children. But the national assembly now extended its system of confiscation to the properties of foreigners. Several German princes, secular and ecclesiastical, held great possessions in Alsace, by tenures repeatedly ratified under the most solemn treaties; and guaranteed by the great neighbouring powers. Yet these rights the national assembly overthrew by a mere act of lawless robbery.[i] This flagrant aggression on the rights of independent powers, not only excited the indignant resentment of the princes who were actually despoiled, but the displeasure and apprehensions of others. The confiscation of French property by the government was an invasion of the rights of French subjects. But the invasion of foreign property was a declaration of intended hostilities against all nations to which their plundering arms could reach. The emperor remonstrated on this violation of existing treaties, requiring compensation for the past, and security against future attacks on the rights of princes of the empire. The national assembly imputed this requisition to hostile intentions, and affirmed that there was a concert of foreign sovereigns, French princes, and aristocrats, to effect a counter revolution: Lewis, they said, had acceded to this confederation, and was preparing to escape from France.

1791. Forfeiture of the effects of emigrants. Abolition of primogeniture.

Invasion of the rights of German princes.

The emperor remonstrates against this violation of national engagements.

His majesty at Easter had taken the sacrament from the hands of a refractory[k] priest, and had thereby given great offence and alarm to the Parisians. It was also remarked that he had recently promoted officers inimical to the revolution. On the 18th of April, being Easter monday, his majesty and family intended to repair to St.

h See proceedings of the national assembly.
i See proceedings of the national assembly.
k Those clergymen who would not take the prescribed oath were, by the revolutionists styled refractory priests.

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1791 Proposed jaunt of the king to St. Cloud, is prevented by the populace.

Cloud, a palace about three miles from the city, there to spend the holidays. In the morning, as the family was stepping into their coaches, an immense crowd surrounding the carriages, refused to suffer them to proceed, and insisted that they should remain at Paris. The national guards, joining the multitude, exclaimed that the king should not be suffered to depart; and the sovereign found it necessary to comply with the requisition of the populace. After several discussions, the Parisians represented their apprehension of dangers assailing them from various quarters, and especially the king's intimate counsellors. His majesty, to gratify the populace, dismissed various royalists from their places at court, and employed other means to remove the popular dissatisfaction. One step which he took for this purpose, was to send a memorial to the French ministers in foreign countries, with orders to deliver a copy at each court where they respectively resided. This document recapitulated the events which produced and followed the revolution, and described that great change as having importantly improved the condition both of the monarch and the people. It extolled the new constitution, reprobated the efforts employed to overthrow that beneficial fabric, most clearly and unequivocally expressed the royal approbation of the present system, and declared that the assertions of those Frenchmen in foreign parts, who complained that he was obliged to disguise his sentiments, were unfounded in truth. This despatch being communicated on the 23d of April to the national assembly, was received with the loudest applause, and ordered to be posted up in the most conspicuous places of every municipality in the kingdom, to be read at the head of every regiment and company in the army, and on board of every ship in the navy. For several weeks the greatest harmony appeared to prevail between the king and the assembly. Meanwhile the royalists, without being dismayed by the power of the revolutionists, expressed their sentiments with an asperity, which increased the more that in oppression, they saw the injustice of the predominant principles, and felt the misery of their effects. Attachment however to the king's person and family deterred them from measures which they had reason to conclude,

Memorial of Lewis delivered to foreign powers.

would endanger his safety; should they make any decisive movement towards a counter revolution, they did not doubt, a massacre of the royal captives, would be the sacrifice to popular fury. The deliverance of their majesties and the family from a state of real captivity, by whatever name it might be called, would enable them to begin their attempts without hazarding the royal safety. They believed that the majority of the nation secretly cherished the same sentiments with themselves, and would readily cooperate in attempting the restoration of royalty, when they saw hopes of support and success. Under this conviction, his majesty's friends employed their utmost dexterity to effect his escape from Paris. The enterprise appeared arduous, but not impracticable; his majesty was accompanied by a national guard, and also by a Swiss guard; the latter corps was warmly attached to the king and his family. The marquis de Bouillé at different times strongly exhorted the king to fly from his oppressors, and join his friends.[l] After the obstruction of his visit to St. Cloud, he represented to him that by flight, with the countenance of foreign powers, he might be able to head all those friends of moderate liberty, and mixed monarchy, that should be inimical to democratic despotism, and to save his country from the evils by which she was now threatened. At length the marquis prevailed;[m] and it was concerted that the royal family should direct their course to Luxemburgh, the nearest part of the emperor's dominions, and to which the road lay through the northern borders of Lorraine, where de Bouillé being governor of Metz, and having the command of the troops, of whom many were well affected to the king, could facilitate and protect their progress. On the 18th of June the Russian ambassador procured a passport for a Russian lady about (he said) to set out for Germany, with a specified number of attendants and two children. On the 20th, the royal party left Paris about midnight: at St. Menehoud, a postillion recognising Lewis from his picture, informed the postmaster; this person without venturing to stop the

Flight of the king.

He is arrested at Varennes.

l See Bouillé's memoirs.

m The narrative of the king's flight is chiefly compressed from Bouillé's memoirs.

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king himself, despatched his son to Varennes, the next stage, to warn the magistrates. Apprized of his majesty's approach, the magistrates of Varennes were prepared to seize the monarch; they accordingly took him prisoner, and sent him and his family, escorted by a strong guard, to Paris." Meanwhile the king's flight being discovered about eight in the morning, filled the city with the greatest consternation. To overtake him was impracticable, as Paris was not two hundred miles from the frontiers, and he must already have effected one-third of his journey. It was universally believed that hostilities had been concerted between the king and his partisans awaiting him on the frontiers of the kingdom, and that there he was to collect all the force which he could assemble, and invade France.

Proceedings of the legislature during his absence.

The national assembly having met, gave orders that all people should take up arms to repel the attempts expected to be made by the king's party. Lewis had left particular directions that no use should be made of the seals of office till his farther commands: but the assembly decreed that the king having absented himself, the business of the nation, ought nevertheless to proceed; for which reason the seals of the state should, in virtue of their authority as representatives of the nation, be affixed as usual to their decrees, by the chief minister. The following day, news arriving of the capture of the king, turned their fears into exulting joy. On the 22d, the unfortunate prince, amidst the most insulting and triumphant acclamations, was conducted to the former place of his confinement. After investigating the conduct of various suspected persons, they at last determined to subject their sovereign himself to a judicial examination; and to manifest their sentiments respecting kings, quoted the trial of Charles I. of England. A deputation of three members was appointed to receive the king's deposition: his majesty refused to answer any interrogatories, but avowed his willingness to make known the motives for his late departure. His intention (he said) was not to leave the kingdom, but to repair to Montmedi, a fortified town on the frontiers, where his personal liberty would be secure, and his public conduct under no

He is brought back to Paris.

n See the detail in Bouillé's memoirs.

restraint; and where he could have transacted business, together with the assembly, without the imputation of force. He did not object to the constitution, but only to the small degree of liberty allowed to himself, which so impaired the sanction of his voice, as to give it the appearance of compulsion. A memorial which he left at his departure, more fully detailed the various grounds of his dissatisfaction with the national assembly; recapitulated their various acts, and very ably exposed the despotic usurpation of the revolutionary party. The assembly answered this memorial by a manifesto which was intended to prove that their conduct had been directed by regard to the public good, that its effect was internal prosperity, and a strength that would resist every attempt at a counter revolution. From the unsuccessful effort of the king to escape from thraldom, the republicans derived a great accession of strength. They, however, thought it prudent to assume in the assembly the appearance of moderation, while their emissaries and associates in the clubs were occupied in increasing among the people the prevailing hatred of monarchy. No faith could be reposed, they affirmed, in the king or any of his adherents, who were all plotting a counter revolution. Under pretence of guarding against the designs of the royalists, the assembly assumed the organization of the army, and, indeed, the chief part of the executive power, which, at the confederation, they and the people had sworn to leave in the hands of the king. The monarchical party now adopted a system of open, resolute, and vigorous opposition, which, if chosen at a less advanced stage, might have saved their country from the despotism of paramount democracy. They declared that they never would relinquish the defence of the monarchy: no less than two hundred and eighty joined in a bold and explicit protest against the decrees by which the assembly acted independently of the crown; but now their firm boldness was too late. The national assembly, to guard against foreign invasion, gave directions for fortifying the frontiers. Meanwhile they proceeded with the constitutional code; and the king's late attempt caused the insertion of several articles which had not been before proposed. It was decreed by a great

The monarchical party adopt a vigorous system, but too late.

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majority, that a king putting himself at the head of an armed force, hostile to the state, should be considered as having abdicated the crown. The same penalty was denounced against him were he to retract his oath of fidelity to the constitution, or incur the guilt of conspiracy against it by a criminal correspondence with the enemies of the nation. It was farther decreed, that after such abdication he should be treated as a simple citizen, and subjected, like all other individuals, to the common course of law. There was a very warm debate about the inviolability of the king's person. At this time there were four parties in the national assembly, and throughout the French empire: the royalists, whose object was the restoration of the monarchy in its former power and splendor; the moderates, who wished a mixed kingly government, consisting of different estates, uniting security and liberty with social order, and subordination: the third was the constitutionalists, the supporters of the existing polity, which, levelling all ranks and distinctions of subjects, still retained the name of king, and were by far the most numerous: fourthly, the republicans, who were gaining ground in number and strength. The royalists and moderates were eager for the inviolability of the royal person; the constitutionalists were divided; the republicans were strenuously inimical to the proposition: but after a long and animated contest, perceiving that by persisting in their opposition in this point, they would lose the support of many constitutionalists, in order to conciliate the different parties, they proposed certain provisional modifications to accompany the inviolability of the royal person. Their opponents thought it expedient to accede to a compromise; and it was accordingly decreed, that the king's person, with certain restrictions and limitations, should be inviolable. A decree was passed, intrusting the education of the dauphin to a governor appointed by the national assembly, in order to form him to constitutional principles. The moderate party endeavoured again to introduce two separate chambers, and enlarged on the blessings of the British constitution, but their propositions were rejected. The constitutional code being finished, sixty members were appointed to present

State of parties.

Inviolability of the king's person, carried in the assembly.

it to the king: these waited on his majesty with great solemnity, and were very graciously received. When they presented the code, he informed them, that the importance of the subject required his most attentive and serious examination; and that as soon as he had acquitted himself of this duty, he would apprise the assembly of his intentions. The violent republicans hoped that the king would refuse the constitution, and thereby justify a different system. The king and his friends were well informed of their wishes and schemes: the people in general, however, were not yet disposed to establish a commonwealth, and the greater number of them were most strenuous constitutionalists. His friends, aware of the designs of the republicans, advised the king to accept the constitutional code. Being prevailed upon, he, on the 13th of September, wrote a letter[o] announcing his acceptance, and declaring the motives of his former, recent, and present conduct. The following day, repairing to the national assembly, he verbally declared his acceptance, of the constitution; and in presence of the assembly, signed his declaration. He was received with great respect, and attended by the whole assembly on his return to the Thuilleries, amidst the acclamations of all Paris. On the 28th of September the constitution was formally proclaimed at Paris. The substance of the proclamation was, that the important work of the constitution being at length perfected by the assembly, and accepted by the king, it was now intrusted to the protection of the legislature, the crown, and the law; to the affection and fidelity of fathers of families, wives, and mothers; to the zeal and attachment of the young citizens, and to the spirit of the French nation.[p] While the assembly had been thus engaged in completing the new constitutional code, it bestowed the highest honours on the memory of those revolutionizing philosophers who had contributed so powerfully to the change. As Voltaire had been so efficacious an enemy to christianity and the church, the assembly conferred signal honours on his remains, which

The king's friends advise him to accept the constitutional code.

He accepts it in the national assembly.

Honours paid to infidel philosophers.

o See State Papers, September 13th, 1791.
p See State Papers, September 28th, 1791.

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they ordered to be transported from his burial place, and deposited in the church of St. Genevive, the place appointed for receiving the ashes, and perpetuating the memory, of those who had deserved well of the French nation. Equal honours were decreed to Rousseau: he had been the object of almost constant persecution by priests and their votaries. France, that had now dispelled the clouds of superstition, and broken the fetters of tyranny, after having profitted so much by his labours, ought to pay that veneration to his memory when dead, which ignorance and superstition had denied to him while he was alive. The public joined with the assembly in doing homage to the characters of these writers, and also to Helvetius and others, who had distinguished themselves by their exertions against christianity. To gratify the prevailing sentiment, the theatres were, as usual, accommodated: plays were represented in which infidel writers and doctrines were held up to admiration: religion, and the various establishments and orders by which it had been maintained, were exposed to ridicule and contempt. That they might contribute as much as possible to the perpetuation of their system, the revolutionists endeavoured to instil such sentiments concerning the relations of domestic and private life, as would best correspond with their political establishments[q].

Want of money.

AMIDST the many plans for regenerating France, there was one evil which ingenuity could not remedy, this was the scarcity of money. Nothwithstanding the immense forfeitures, there was still a great deficiency of income compared with expenditure. The army required to support the new liberty was more numerous, and much more expensive, than the armies of the old monarchy had been at the most extravagant periods. The populace considered exemption from taxes as one of the sacred rights which they ought to enjoy, and therefore paid very sparingly and reluctantly. The boldest and most ardent champions of religious, moral, civil, and political, regeneration, neglected no opportunity *of committing theft*. The assembly had declared that all property belonged to

q See Burke's Letter to a Member of the National Assembly.

the state : from this comprehensive theorem they deduced a corollary,[r] that whatever was thus acquired by the state belonged to any lawgiver or statesman that could get it into his possession. Though these peculators publicly celebrated the credit of the national paper, in their own accumulations they gave the preference to gold and silver. Many other moneyed men who had amassed their riches by fair means, being doubtful concerning the stability of the new government, hoarded the greater part of their cash. All who were disaffected to the revolutionary system, to discourage assignats as well as to secure their own property, concealed as much as possible their gold and silver. A great part of the hidden treasures was lodged in foreign countries, especially the British funds, which even the French patriots practically acknowledged to afford the best security for property.[s] As silver and gold disappeared, the paper money was proportionably depreciated ; and great pecuniary distress prevailed. The indigent now became a more numerous body than ever, and made desperate through want, broke into every recess where they thought money was hoarded, and exercised their depredations with such dexterity, that numbers of individuals lost immense sums, notwithstanding the carefulness and extraordinary precautions with which they had been concealed.[t] As a considerable part of pecuniary distress was imputed to the administrators of the revenue who were the most zealous members of the popular party, the aristocrats very minutely investigated and severely scrutinized their conduct ; and when the accounts were presented for inspection, declared openly, that they conceived them false, and the documents and vouchers by which they were supported fabricated for the purpose of covering fraud and depredation. The arguments and statements were very strong and clear, but the assembly overthrew arithmetical results by a majority of votes ; and *so far* the patriots were cleared from the charges. The

Inspection of accounts.

r See Playfair's history of jacobinism.

s So great was the influx of French money into England during the year 1791, that whereas seventy-five had been the average price of the consolidated annuities of three per cent. during the five preceding years of peace and prosperity, from midsummer 1791 the average price was about eighty-eight.

t See Playfair on jacobinism.

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1791. Dissolution of the national assembly. Review of the principal changes effected by this body.

purgation of these patriotic financiers was the last important act of the national assembly: on the 30th of September, 1791, this body was dissolved by a speech from the king, in which he solemnly repeated his promises to maintain the constitution.

How it found and left France.

Thus terminated the first national assembly of France, which in little more than two years had effected a more complete change in the government, ranks, orders, laws, religion, doctrines, opinions, sentiments, and manners of the people, than any legislative body ever before effected in a series of ages. It found an absolute monarchy; left an uncontroled popular legislature, with a king nominally limited, actually subdued. It found the laws, which emanating from the Roman code, and intermingled with the feudal institutions, had spread over the greater part of Europe, and subsisted in France for twelve centuries; it left a new code, which originated in a metaphysical fiction of universal equality; vindicated to man, when member of a community, all the rights which might belong to him in a state of separation from his fellow men, and applied to a constituted society principles that presuppose no society to exist. It found disparity of rank, a political result from inequality of ability and character, extending itself to descendants: it left all rank and eminence levelled with meanness and obscurity; seeing that in the progress of hereditary transmission there might be degeneracy, instead of correcting the abuse, it abolished the establishment. It took away one of the strongest incentives to splendid and beneficial actions, in the desire of a parent to acquire, maintain, or extend, honour or dignity, which he may not only enjoy himself, but transmit to his children. It found the people, though turbulent and reluctantly submiting to arbitrary power, well inclined to a free system, which should include order and subordination. Expelling monarchical despotism, instead of stopping at the middle stage, which wisdom dictated, it carried the people to the opposite extreme of democratic anarchy. Impressing the multitude with an opinion that the general will was the sole rule of government, it induced them to suppose that their wills jointly and individually were to be exempt from restraint; and that the subjection of passion to

the control of reason and virtue, was an infringement of liberty. It found property secure, and left arbitrary confiscation predominant. It found the people christians; left them infidels. But whatever opinion impartial posterity may entertain of this legislative body, either in the revolution which they effected, or the new system which they established, it must be admitted that uncommon ingenuity, skill, vigour, and perseverance, were displayed in the means adopted to give to the projected changes the desired effect. Their great and fundamental principle was, to revolutionize the minds of their countrymen, as the only sure means of civil and political revolution. In the clubs, the populace, and the army, modelled by their pleasure, they formed most effectual instruments for carrying their schemes into execution, and rendering their will the paramount law. The first national assembly manifested ability and genius, which, unfortunately for their country, were neither guided by wisdom nor prompted by virtue.

In all its excesses it manifested the genius and energy of the French character.

THE revolutionary leaders did not confine their efforts to their own country. They employed emissaries in other nations to disseminate their principles and cooperate with champions in the same cause. A spirit of political enthusiasm had, indeed, been spread through a great part of Europe. In Germany, and particularly in the Prussian dominions, a set arose, though under different denominations, who, ascribing the greater part of human calamities to bigotry, superstition, arbitrary power, and error, endeavoured to awaken their cotemporaries to the most animated hopes, of the advantages that were to flow from political improvement, philosophical education, and, in all things, a vigorous exercise of reason. They professed, at the same time, the warmest sentiments of humanity, and a spirit of universal philanthropy. In Britain, as we have seen, the leading doctrines of the French revolution were maintained from various causes, and to different extents, by numbers of writers, more especially by those of the unitarian dissenters. In the beginning of this year Dr. Priestley employed his rapid and indefatigable pen in answering Mr. Burke. After repeating his usual arguments against the existing establishments, the doctor confined himself to

Progress of political enthusiasm.

Britain.

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a prophetic vision of the manifold blessings which *were to flow* through the world from the glorious French revolution. This event was to diffuse liberty, to meliorate society, and to increase *virtue and happiness*. A political millennium was about to be established, when men should be governed by the purity of their own minds, and the moderation of their own desires, without external coercion, when no authority should exist but that of reason, and no legislators but philosophers and disseminators of truth. But a work soon after made its appearance, which, however little entitled to historical record for its own intrinsic merits, is well worthy of mention, as the cause of very important and alarming effects; this was a treatise entitled, *The rights of man*, by Thomas Paine; already mentioned as the author of a violent pamphlet written to prevent reunion between Britain and her colonies. Paine having gone to Paris soon after the commencement of the revolution, and thoroughly imbibed its doctrines and sentiments, undertook to induce the English to copy so glorious a model. Perhaps, indeed, there never was a writer who more completely attained the art of imposing and impressing nonsense on ignorant and undistinguished minds, as sense and sound reasoning, more fitted for playing on the passions of the vulgar; for gaining their affections by gratifying their prejudices, and through those affections procuring their assent to any assertions which he chose to advance. His manner was peculiarly calculated to impress and effect such objects. The coarse familiarity of his language was in unison with vulgar taste; the directness of his efforts and boldness of his assertions passed with ignorance for the confidence of undoubted truth. It was not only the manner of his communication, but the substance of his doctrine, that was peculiarly pleasing to the lower ranks. Vanity, pride, and ambition, are passions which exist with as much force in the tap room of an alehouse as in a senate. When peasants, labourers, and journeymen mechanics, were told that they were as fit for governing the country as any man in parliament, it was a very pleasing idea; it gave an agreeable swell to their self importance: when farther informed, that they were not only qualified for such high appointments, but also, if they exerted themselves that they were

Certain ingenious visionaries expect a political millennium.

Thomas Paine.

Rights of Man—dexterous adaptation of to the sentiments and passions of the vulgar.

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within the reach, they were still more delighted. Through a book so popular, very great additions were made to the English admirers of the French revolution. Societies and clubs, in imitation of the French jacobins, fast increasing in number and divisions, testified the highest approbation of Paine's *Rights of Man*; and very industriously, through their affiliations, spread cheap editions of it among the common people, in all parts of the kingdom.

Astonishing popularity of among the lower ranks.

On the 14th of July a party of the admirers of the French revolution met at Birmingham to commemorate its commencement, under the auspices of its great champion Dr. Priestley. Previous to the meeting, a handbill[u] was circulated outrageously seditious, stigmatising all the established orders, and urging insurrection against church and state. As the majority of the inhabitants were warmly attached to the constitution, this mischievous production excited very great alarm and rage. The celebrators having assembled, the populace surrounded the tavern where they were met; and as Dr. Priestley had so often and openly avowed his enmity to the church, they very unfortunately supposed that the present paper, dooming our establishment to destruction, was composed and dispersed by him and his votaries. Under this apprehension they became extremely riotous, burnt one of the conventicles, destroyed several private houses, and, among the rest, the library of Dr. Priestley, containing a most valuable apparatus for philosophical experiments, and also many manuscripts. The tumults raged for two days so violently that the civil magistrates were inadequate to their suppression. A military force arriving the third day, dispersed the mob; and the magistrates, thus assisted, reestablished tranquillity. All friends to our king and constitution sincerely regretted these lawless proceedings, though evidently originating in a zealous attachment to our establishment. Men of science lamented the destruction of Dr. Priestley's library, of his collection, machinery, and compositions on physical subjects, *in which department* the exertion of his talents and learning were supremely valuable.

Commemoration of the French revolution at Birmingham.

Riots.

Destruction of Dr. Priestley's library.

u See Gentleman's Magazine for July, 1791, and Chronicle of Annual Register for the same month.

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THE conduct of Dr. Priestley himself upon this occasion, though it could not diminish the public abhorrence of such outrageous violence, by no means increased sympathy in the sufferings of its principal object. Hastening to London, he wrote an address to the inhabitants of Birmingham, in which, though he justly exposed the lawless disorder of the insurgents, and naturally complained of the mischiefs that they had perpetrated, yet the main scope of his letter was to attack the church, and impute the riots to its principal supporters in the vicinity. The tumultuous excesses he illogically and falsely ascribed to the badness of the cause; as if the intrinsic merits of any system could be lessened by the madness or folly of its defenders. Various addresses of condolence sent to Dr. Priestley by societies of dissenters, and other clubs, very clearly demonstrated the sanguine hopes of the writers, that the downfal of our establishments was approaching. Mr. Benjamin Cooper, secretary of the revolution society, hoped that the church which he (Mr. Benjamin Cooper) pronounced *an ignorant and interested intolerance*, was near its end. Dr. Priestley's reply chimed with this Mr. Benjamin Cooper's tune. The young students at Hackney college, expressed their conviction of the folly of existing establishments. Priestley's answer[x] to their letter may be considered as a *recitation of his political creed.* The hierarchy (he said) equally the bane of christianity and of rational liberty, was about to fall: he exhorted these young men strenuously to use their efforts in so glorious a cause, and to show by the *ardor* and *force* of their exertions against the constituted authorities, how much more *enlightened* understandings, and liberal sentiments were formed by the plan and instructions of their academy, than those that were imbibed in national institutions, fettering and depressing the mind. The doctrines so earnestly inculcated by Priestley and his class of enemies to our establishments, tended to promote the success of Paine's political lessons. Priestley was more fitted for forming visionary and sophistical speculatists among men of superficial literature, whereas Paine was best qualified

Comparison between Priestley and Paine.

x See Gentleman's Magazine, for November, 1791, p. 1024, and Annual Register, 1791. Appendix to Chronicle, p. 86.

for effecting a change on the vulgar and ignorant. Priestley dealt chiefly in prescription; his nostrum to be applied to every case was *alterative:* Paine was operatical and proposed *immediate incision.* From Priestley proceeded such philosophers as Godwin and Holcroft, from Paine such practical reformers as Watt and Thelwall. Priestley, to use his own words, had laid the train, Paine's desire was to light the match. Republican, and even democratic principles, continued to make a rapid progress during the remainder of the year. It would be extremely unjust and illiberal to impute to unitarian dissenters indiscriminately, the principles and intentions so obvious in the heresiarch. It is however well known, that if not all, very many of that class of dissenters were at this time inimical to the British constitution of church and state. Besides the dissenters, there were other sets of men who regarded the French revolution as a model for imitation. From causes purely political, without any mixture of theology, some of the votaries of a change in parliament, and other departments of the state, conceived the diffusion of French principles highly favourable to their plans of reform. In the metropolis, besides men of genius and learning, well affected to the French revolution, there was another set of adventurers in literature and politics, very eager in maintaining and spreading its doctrines. If learning be not more profound in the present than in former ages, it is certainly spread over a much wider surface. The commercial opulence of the country encourages the manufacture and sale of literary commodities of every value and denomination. The demand extended to a vast variety of productions, which require neither deep learning nor vigorous genius, the number of authors multiplies in proportion to the moderate qualifications that are necessary. All these, down to translators of German novels, and collectors of paragraphs for the daily papers, deem themselves *persons of genius and erudition, and members of the republic of letters.* In France, literary men possessed great direction; many of this class in England conceived, that if the same system were established here, they might rise to be directors in the new order of things. There were in the literary class, as in other bodies, persons who, from

Rapid and extensive diffusion of democratic principles.

Wide diffusion of superficial literature,

favourable to revolutionary notions.

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a benevolent enthusiasm, hoped that the French constitution would extirpate vice and misery, and diffuse over the world philanthropy and happiness. Among the literary producers, there was one set who thought the highest perfection of the human character was sensibility; and that the restraints of religious and moral precepts, as well as of political establishments, were harsh and tyrannical, because they so often contradicted the impulse of sentimental feeling; these praised the French revolution in the belief that it was inimical to austere restrictions. Under this class were to be ranked various female votaries of literature, and at their head Mary Ann Wollstonecraft, who produced, as a counterpart to the Rights of Man, a performance entitled the Rights of Woman; vindicating to the sex an exemption from various restrictions to which women had been hitherto subjected from the tyranny and aristocracy of men; but first and principally from the restraint of chastity; and claiming the free and full indulgence of every gratification which fancy could suggest, or passion stimulate. Besides these classes, there was a great and multiplying variety of clubs for political discussion and debate. To these resorted many mechanics, tradesmen, and others, from a desire extremely prevalent among the lower English, of distinguishing themselves as *spokesmen*. By degrees, from hearing speeches and reading pamphlets, they supposed themselves politicians and philosophers, and thought it incumbent on so enlightened men, to drop the prejudices of education; and sacrificed religion, patriotism, and loyalty, at the shrine of vanity. From so many causes, and through so many agents, the revolutionary doctrines were disseminated very widely. To facilitate circulation, opulent votaries published cheap editions of the most inflammatory works, especially Paine's *Rights of Man*, which contained the essence of all the rest.

Mary Ann Wollstonecraft.

Debating societies.

Cheap editions of Tom Paine's works.

But men of high rank, and of the highest ability and character, still admired the French revolution as likely to produce, when corrected by time and experience, the extension of moderate and rational liberty; and besides Dr. Priestley, a few others of eminent genius celebrated the French changes, in literary works. Of these, by far the most distinguished production that appeared in England

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in vindication of the French revolution, was Mr. Mackintosh's answer to Mr. Burke. The obvious purpose of this learned and philosophical writer is the melioration of the condition of man; convinced that men habitually guided by reason, and determined by virtue, would be happier under small than considerable restraints, he proposed a control too feeble for the actual state of men now existing; much more of a people whose national character, from the old despotism, and other causes, required a greater degree of control than some of their neighbours. The erroneous conclusions of this forcible and profound writer, appear to have arisen from two sources; first he argued from a supposition of an attainable perfection in the human character instead of an accurate estimate of the degree of perfection which it had actually attained. Secondly, he appears to have been misinformed concerning the principles, spirit and character of the French revolutionists.

One able and profound work in favour of the French revolution. Vindiciæ Gallicæ.

GREAT and important as the progressions of public opinions were in 1791, to arrest the attention of the philosophical observer, the actual events in England to employ the pen of the annalist, were not numerous. His highness the duke of York, in the close of the year 1791, married the eldest princess of Prussia, between whom and the English prince a mutual affection had subsisted ever since the royal youth's residence at the court of Berlin. The arrival of the fair stranger, the many festivities that ensued on so auspicious an occasion, and the appearance of the new married couple in public, agreeably relieved the political discussions which had long absorbed the attention of the public.

Marriage of the duke of York to the princess of Prussia.

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Meeting of parliament.—Opposition censure the conduct of ministry respecting Russia.—Incidental but interesting debates about the French revolution.—Real difference between messrs. Burke and Fox.—Motion of Mr. Whitbread respecting the riots at Birmingham.—Petition of the unitarian dissenters—rejected.—Multiplication of political clubs.—Society of the friends of the people—rank, character and property of the members.—Mr. Grey.—The earl of Lauderdale.—Address of the society to the people of Great Britain.—Intention good, but tendency dangerous.—Mr. Pitt opposes this engine of change.—Rise and progress of corresponding societies.—Second part of Thomas Paine's Rights of Man.—Ferment among the populace.—The lower classes become politicians and statesmen.—Proclamation against seditious writings—discussed in parliament.—Schism among the members of opposition.—The heir apparent testifies his zeal for supporting the British constitution.—General satisfaction from the manifestation of the prince's sentiments.—Bill for the amendment of the London police.—Humane and discriminate propositions of lord Rawdon for the relief of debtors and benefit of creditors.—Abolition of the slave trade is carried in the the house of commons.—Subject discussed in the house of lords.—Duke of Clarence opposes the abolition.—His highness exhibits a masterly view of the various arguments.—The question postponed.—State of the crown lands—especially forests.—Mr. Pitt's bill for enclosing parts of the New Forest—disapproved—rejected by the peers.—Mr. Dundas's bill for facilitating the payment of wages and prize money to sailors—passed.—Finances.—Prosperous state of commerce and revenue.—Prospect of farther reducing the debt, and diminishing the taxes.—Flourishing state of India finances.—Political state and transactions in India.—Beneficial effects of

Mr. Pitt's legislative measures, and Mr. Dundas's executive management.—Sir John Macpherson, governor general.—Able and successful administration—succeeded by lord Cornwallis.—Wise plans of comprehensive improvement.—Tippoo Saib recruits his strength.—His ambitious projects revive—attacks our ally the rajah of Travancore.—The British council remonstrates to no purpose.—The English armies invade Mysore from the east and west coasts.—Campaign of 1790—*indecisive.* —1791 *lord Cornwallis himself takes the field—reduces the greater part of Mysore—comes within sight of Seringapatam—prevented by the overflow of the Cavery from investing the metropolis of Mysore.—In* 1792 *besieges Seringapatam.—Tippoo Saib sues for peace, and obtains it at the dictation of lord Cornwallis.—Generous conduct of his lordship respecting the prize money. —Measures for the improvement of British India.*

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PARLIAMENT met January 31st, 1792. His majesty's speech mentioned the marriage of his son, and the peace concluded between Russia and Turkey; but dwelt chiefly on the rapidly increasing prosperity of the British nation, which must confirm steady and zealous attachment to a constitution that we have found, from long experience, to unite the inestimable blessings of liberty and order; and to which, under the favour of providence, all our advantages are principally to be ascribed. Members of opposition arraigned the conduct of ministers concerning Russia. Both the accusation and defence necessarily repeated former arguments. The British government thought interference was necessary for the balance of power; and though they had sacrificed their own counsels to the voice of the public, the armament prepared upon that occasion had not been useless, as it had prevented the Turks from being obliged to make such concessions as would have been otherwise extorted.[y] Mr. Fox conceiving himself, and those who coincided in his sentiments respecting the French revolution, indirectly censured by the praises of the British polity, clearly and forcibly de-

Incidental but interesting debates about the French revolution.

y See Parliamentary Debates, January 31st, 1792.

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monstrated the compatibility of satisfaction at the downfal of French despotism, so inimical to human rights, and destructive to human happiness, with the highest veneration and warmest attachment to the British constitution, the preserver of rights, and promoters of happiness. He rejoiced at the overthrow of the French despotism because it was bad, but would use every effort to support the British constitution because it was good. In subsequent discussions Mr. Fox, more explicitly than ever, exhibited to the house his sentiments and views on this momentous subject. The French, with characters formed by the old despotism, now emancipated from slavery, are actuated by a most impetuous enthusiasm, which drives them, as it has driven every other votary, to violent excesses. But enthusiasm like every ardent passion, must, as knowledge of human nature and history inform us, ere long subside. It is illogical to impute to the principles of the French revolution the excesses which really arise from a sublimated state of passion that cannot last. Enthusiasm accompanied the reformation; enthusiasm marked the efforts of the puritans, which vindicated British liberty from kingly and priestly tyranny. But the free principles and beneficial establishments subsist many ages after the passion subsided. Do not therefore proscribe the French revolution because a fury that must be temporary has inspired many of its votaries. Let the noxious fumes evaporate, you will retain the genuine spirit of liberty salutary to mankind. Such was the opinion of one personage, not less profound as a political philosopher than forcible as an orator, decisive and energetic as a statesman. Many and various in detail as were the subjects of difference between him and Mr. Burke upon French affairs, the principle was simple. Fox esteemed the outrages incidental effects of an enthusiasm which must be temporary, and which formed no part of the essential character of the revolution: Burke reckoned the excesses necessary and essential parts of the revolution, which legitimately descended from its nature and principles; and increased as they advanced, and which could never cease to operate until the revolutionary system ceased to exist. Fox thought the French to be men in the ardent pursuit of what was good, and transported by passion beyond the

Real difference between messrs. Burke and Fox.

bounds of moderation and wisdom; as men pursuing what was really good have often been transported: Burke considered the whole nation as actuated by a spirit of diabolism, eagerly bent on perpetrating all possible mischief; a phenomenon never before known in the history of mankind; and therefore, if true in that particular case, requiring, from its contravention to probability, the stronger evidence. From the opposite theories which they formed as political philosophers, these illustrious men deduced very opposite practical systems, which they recommended as statesmen. Burke very early[z] recommended and inculcated a confederacy, which, upon his hypothesis, was not only wise, but absolutely necessary. If the French were devils incarnate, to prevent the diabolical spirit from operation, neighbouring nations must overwhelm the power of beings so possessed, or perish themselves from the frenzy. Fox, not regarding them as a multitude of demons, but as the votaries of enthusiasm, recommended to encourage their spirit of liberty, and suffer their passions to subside through time, the surest corrector. Hostile interference in their internal concern, would support instead of extinguishing their enthusiasm, turn its efforts to external defence, and give them an energy that would prove fatal to those who had roused it into action. These were the leading diversities in the theoretical and practical systems of messrs. Fox and Burke, which account for the whole series of their respective counsels and conduct concerning France. Ministers still avoided the delivery of opinions on events and systems which had not interfered with the interest of Great Britain. Though the French revolution was never directly before the house, yet many of its proceedings arose from questions of liberty and reform which that great event was instrumental in suggesting. Mr. Whitbread, a new member, of good talents, respectable character, and immense fortune, who had joined the party of Mr. Fox, reviewing the riots at Birmingham, imputed these outrages to the encouragement given by government to persecutors of the dissenters, because they were inimical to civil and ecclesiastical tyranny. The

Motion of Mr. Whitbread respecting the riots at Birmingham.

z See his hints for a memorial to be delivered to the French ambassador; and Thoughts on French affairs, both written in 1791.

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magistrates were not sufficiently active; the government had been dilatory in sending troops; and several rioters had been acquitted: some after being condemned, were pardoned. Mr. Dundas, now secretary of state, said, that on inquiry by the attorney general, there appeared no grounds for censuring the magistrates. From a detail of dates, and military stations, he proved that no time had been lost in despatching troops to Birmingham. The rioters pardoned, had experienced the royal mercy on the recommendation of the judges.

THE Scotch episcopalians perceiving a disposition in parliament to extend toleration as far as political security would admit, petitioned for a more ample and unrestrained indulgence, than that which they had hitherto enjoyed. The former motives for laying them under legal discouragements, subsisted no longer: the house of Stuart, to which their attachment was known, was extinct; and their fidelity to the actual government was not liable, on that account, to be suspected. A petition for exemption from restraints, the reasons of which no longer existed, was favourably received by a legislature at once indulgent and discriminating. A bill was accordingly introduced into the house of lords, and passed both houses. The unitarians alleging this law as a precedent, applied for a repeal of the penal statutes; and in addition to the usual reasons for refusing their application, their recent practices were stated as inimical to church and state, especially their active dissemination of Paine's works, and other democratical performances, and their formation of political clubs and societies.

Petition of the unitarian dissenters, rejected.

Multiplication of political clubs.

WHILE various subjects of alleged defect, or projected amendment, either in measures of government, or the existing laws were agitated, a project was formed by a society of gentlemen, for making an important change in the composition of the legislature; this association, consisting of men eminent for talents, for character, for political, literary, and professional ability; for landed and mercantile property, for rank and importance in the community, took to themselves the name of the *friends of the people*. The following were the general objects which they professed to seek:—To restore the freedom of elec-

tion, and to secure to the people a more frequent exercise of their right of electing their representatives. For the purpose of these reforms in parliament and the country, they instituted their society, but though determined to promote them, resolved to confine their pursuit rigorously to such means, as should be consistent with the existing constitution. A short declaration of these objects and means, was framed by a committee, and signed by the society, with an address to the people of England tending to prove; first, that reform was wanted; secondly, that the present, a season of peace and prosperity, was the best fitted for commencing and establishing that reform; and that if there existed some degree of discontent, the proposed reform was well fitted for its removal: that the projected means were calculated to promote the good without incurring any danger; thirdly, the objection arising from recent events in France, could not apply to a case so very different, as the British constitution, with some abuses, was from the old despotism of France. The object of the society was to recover and preserve the true balance of the constitution. They announced the determination of the society, to move a reform in parliament early the ensuing session. On these avowed principles of their union, they looked with confidence for the cooperation of the British nation: these are the outlines of an address which may be considered as the manifesto of the *only* respectable body, which, since the commencement of the French revolution, undertook the cause of parliamentary reform. The society included the greater number of eminent oppositionists in the house of commons with one member of the house of lords: This was James earl of Lauderdale, a nobleman of very considerable abilities, and deeply conversant in moral and political philosophy and history, who had distinguished himself, first as lord Maitland in the house of commons, and afterwards made a no less conspicuous figure in the house of peers. Mr. Grey was appointed to take the leading part for the society in the house of commons. Mr. Grey had been educated an English whig, and considered the opposition party as the supporters of whig principles; and in his present measure conceived himself paving the way for a truly whig

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Society of the friends of the people,

rank, character, and property of the members.

The earl of Lauderdale.

Mr. Grey.

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parliament. The rank and fortune of this peer and commoner, independent of their respective characters, and also the talents, character, and situation of other members, afford very satisfactory grounds for believing them actuated by constitutional motives. It is indeed not impossible to suppose, that subordinate to patriotism mere anti-ministerial considerations might have some weight, and that, as Mr. Pitt had once been the advocate of reform, and was not likely to be so in the present circumstances, they might hope to reduce him to some embarrassment, and expose him to the charge of inconsistency. But though such intentions perhaps operated in some degree with some of the members, there is much reason to be convinced that the friends of the people, as a society, desired only what they conceived to be moderate reform, without having the least design to invade the fundamental parts of the constitution. Their association however was liable to weighty objections: these were not incidental, but resulted from the nature, constitution, and proceedings of the society, combined with the circumstances of the country; their two declared objects, extension of suffrage, and abridgment of the duration of parliament, were both expressed in vague terms; so that they might be, and in fact actually were, construed differently by the different votaries of reform: By very many they were interpreted with so great latitude, as to comprehend universal suffrage and annual parliaments. An address to the people of Great Britain, severally or aggregately respectable, as they were desiring them to cooperate in producing an undefined change in the legislature, was a measure, however pure in its motives, very doubtful in its tendency. Presuming the existence of great and radical abuses, it either supposed the incompetency of parliament to remedy evils, and consequently its insufficiency for its constitutional purposes; or was futile in desiring from the people a cooperation which was not wanted. It afterwards appeared that this society proposed to the people, to form themselves into associations to petition parliament for reform. They thereby afforded a colourable pretext for framing associations composed of very different members, and entertaining very different sentiments: the friends of the people eventually

Address of the society to the people of Great Britain.

Intention good, but tendency dangerous.

produced the affiliated political clubs, which are since so well known under the name of the Corresponding Society, and proved so dangerous in their operations.

To sound the disposition of parliament, Mr. Grey intimated his intention of urging parliamentary reform early in the next session. Mr. Pitt totally regardless of the imputations which might be made against himself personally, most unequivocally, reprobated the design of the society; he was friendly to reform, peaceably obtained and by general concurrence, but deemed the present season altogether improper; and was therefore inimical to the attempt. The object of the society was to effect a change by the impulse of the people: he would strenuously oppose the movement of so formidable an engine; the operations and consequences of which was so much calculated to outgo the intentions of the mover. Mr. Fox did not join a society whose objects and proposed means were so extremely indefinite; and the notice was received with very strong and general disapprobation. The affiliated clubs now imitating the French jacobins, rapidly multiplied; the principal assemblage of this sort, was the *London Corresponding Society*; the secretary of these politicians was one Thomas Hardy, a shoemaker, their ostensible plan was under the auspices of this shoemaker, and others of equal political ability, and importance in the community, to effect a change in parliament. The great preceptor of these disciples was Thomas Paine, whose second part was now published, and strenuously exhorted the practical application of the doctrines, which he had promulgated in his first; it directed his votaries to pull down every establishment, and level all distinctions, in order to enjoy the Rights of Man; by far the greater number of the lower ranks and a considerable portion of the middling classes were infected with the revolutionary fever which operated in the wildest and most extravagant ravings. Thomas Paine was represented as the minister of God, dispensing light to a darkened world:[a] the most industrious and useful classes of the state were seized with a furious desire of abandoning their own course of beneficial and produc-

Mr. Pitt opposes this engine of change.

Rise and progress of corresponding societies.

Second part of Thomas Paine's Rights of Man.

Ferment among the populace.

a See a seditious morning paper of those days, called the Argus; also democratical pamphlets, and the Analytical Review for 1791 and 1792, passim.

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The lower classes become politicians and statesmen.

tive labour, and taking the management of public affairs into their own hands. All the levelling notions of John Ball, John Cade, and the fifth monarchy men appeared to revive with an immense addition of new extravagance. Government had considered the theories of Thomas Paine's first part, as such deviations from common sense, that they expected their intrinsic absurdity would prevent them from doing any actual mischief, and had therefore forborne a judicial animadversion which might have given them adventitious importance. But when they found, that attempts were made to reduce the theories into practice, and that a second part of the speculative jargon, added direct exhortations to subvert the constitution, that they were very generally read by the vulgar and ignorant classes, and producing other works of a similar tendency, they adopted means both for a penal retrospect and for future prevention. A prosecution was commenced against Paine; and a proclamation issued May 21st, warning the people against such writings and also such correspondencies with foreign parts, as might produce the same or similar effects; and enjoining all magistrates to exert their utmost efforts to discover the authors, printers, and publishers of such pernicious works. A copy of the proclamation being laid before the houses of parliament was taken into consideration on the 25th of May: and the discussion which it underwent showed that a very considerable schism had taken place among members of opposition. Mr. Grey and the friends of the people, took the most active share in censuring the proclamation as neither necessary nor useful for its ostensible purpose. Their arguments were that the seditious writings which it professed an intention to restrain had prevailed for more than a year, and if they were so noxious ought to have been prosecuted at common law: and on their own hypothesis that the works in question were dangerous, ministers deserved severe censure for not having before employed proper means to remove this danger. But the prevention of seditious writings, was not the real object of the proclamation: its purpose was to disparage the friends of the people, to prevent parliamentary reform, and to disunite the whigs; and it was farther intended to increase the

Proclamation against seditious writings.

Discussions in parliament.

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influence of government by subjecting to spies and informers, all who should differ from administration. These sentiments were by no means general, even among the usual adversaries of Mr. Pitt: in both houses, many members accustomed to vote with opposition joined the minister upon this occasion.[b] Considering precaution against the present rage of innovation as necessary to preserve the constitution, and their respective rank, property, and distinctions, they joined in supporting a measure calculated, they conceived, to repress so alarming a spirit. The overthrow of the aristocracy, abasement of rank, and confiscation of property under the new French system, impressed on their minds by the glowing eloquence of Mr. Burke, had alarmed many of the chief nobility, and great landed proprietors for their own privileges and possessions. These with their friends and adherents, and others who entertained or pretended to entertain similar sentiments without forming a junction with the ministers, voted on the same side, on subjects that respected the French revolution or any of its doctrines. In the house of peers, the earl of Lauderdale and the marquis of Lansdown only spoke against the proclamation: from this time ceased the great whig confederacy, which during the principal part of the two former reigns had been predominant; and during the present was so powerful as to have repeatedly ejected the ministers agreeable to the crown.

Schism among members of opposition.

On this occasion the heir apparent for the first time delivered his sentiments in parliament. His highness considering the critical state of affairs, as requiring from every friend to his country, a manifestation of the principles which he was resolved to support, and the more strongly in proportion to his rank and consequence in the country, spoke to the following effect:—"When a subject "of such magnitude is before the house, I should be defi- "cient in my duty as a member of parliament, unmindful "of that respect which I owe to the constitution, and inat- "tentive to the welfare, the peace, and the happiness of the "people if I did not state to the world my opinion on the "present subject of deliberation. I was educated in the

The heir apparent testifies his zeal for supporting the British constitution.

b See Parliamentary Debates of May 25th, 1792.

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" principles of the British constitution, and shall ever pre-
" serve its maxims: I shall ever cherish a reverence for
" the constitutional liberties of the people; as on those
" constitutional principles carried uniformly into practice,
" the happiness of these realms depends, I am determined
" as far as my interest can have any force, to give them
" my firm and constant support. The question at issue
" is in fact, whether the constitution is or is not to be
" maintained; whether the wild ideas of untried theory
" are to conquer the wholesome maxims of established prac-
" tice; whether those laws under which we have flourish-
" ed for such a series of years, are to be subverted by a
" reform unsanctioned by the people. As a person nearly
" and dearly interested in the welfare, and I shall emphati-
" cally add the happiness of the people, it would be treason
" to the principles of my own mind, if I did not come for-
" ward and declare my disapprobation of the seditious writ-
" ings, which have occasioned the motion before your
" lordships. My interest is connected with the interest of
" the people; they are so inseparable, that unless both
" parties concurred, the happiness of neither could exist.
" On this great and this solid basis, I ground my vote for
" joining in the address which approves of the proclama-
" tion. I exist by the love, the friendship, and the benev-
" olence of the people, and their cause I will never forsake
" so long as I live." The patriotic sentiments, so forcibly and impressively declared in the manly and dignified eloquence of the royal speaker, conveyed very great and general satisfaction to all his hearers, who loved their country, to whatever party they might adhere.

General satisfaction from the manifestation of the prince's sentiments.

AMONG the applicants for reform this year were the royal boroughs of Scotland, from which certain petitioners stated flagrant abuses in the administration of the revenues, and also other grievances, that, if proved, would have demanded redress; but the allegations not having been supported by proof, the motions arising from the petitions were negatived by a great majority.

State of the police in the metropolis.

GREAT complaints very generally and justly prevailed at this time of the police of London. The British capital surpasses in populousness all European cities; in opulence any city throughout the known world. With wealth

comes luxury, which frequently extends beyond the possessors of riches, pervades many of the poorer classes, and produces habitual wants, that cannot be supplied but by criminal means. In a city abounding with every pleasure that can captivate the human heart, excess and debauchery naturally exist. The freedom of the country does not permit the same means of prevention as under absolute governments; hence dissipation ripens into profligacy, profligacy rises into criminal enormity. In London the temptations are powerful and seductive to those indulgences which corrupt principle, vitiate character, and waste property. Thence arises the desire of seizing by fraud, theft, or force, the substance of others as the means of vice. The practicability of plunder is much greater, and the materials of depredation much more numerous, valuable, and accessible,[c] than in any other city known in the history of mankind. Besides the profligate of our own country, London, like ancient Rome,[d] is the receptacle of exotic wickedness. Every adventurer who, from the poverty of his own country, personal incapacity, idleness, or dissipation, cannot earn a competent subsistence at home, flocks into England, and preys upon the metropolis. Hence arises a very great increase of vice and depredation, in their various departments, but, above all, in that parent of crime, gaming. This destructive propensity within thirty years far surpassed the most extravagant excesses of former times: descending from the great, it pervaded the middle and lower conditions of life, and generated many enormities. Akin to this propensity, and originating in the same desire of acquisition without industry, is the spirit of chimerical adventure in lotteries, funds, and other subjects of hazardous project. Though this spirit enriched several votaries, it empoverished many more; and sent them, with the habits of indulgence which had been cherished during the season of temporary success and aerial hopes, to increase the number of those who find in fraud and rapine the means of luxurious enjoyments. From these and many collateral causes, sprang a vast and increasing variety of crimes against the police

c See Mr. Colquhoun's Treatise on the police, passim.
d See Juvenal, satire iii.

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of the country; against the persons, habitations, and property of the inhabitants. A multiplicity of rules and ordinances had been enacted at divers periods and different occasions, but had experimentally proved unequal to the ends proposed, for want of sufficient powers being lodged in the magistracy and its agents, to discover and suppress, in a summary and expeditious manner, whatever had a visible tendency to disturb the public tranquillity. The justices of the peace were formerly men of rank, property, character, and consideration in the country where they were commissioned to act: such gentlemen gratuitously administered justice. The simplicity of life and manners prevalent among our ancestors did not afford that complication of misbehaviour and of transgressions for which such a multiplicity of laws in modern times, have been provided. But with the modes of artificial life, and the improvements of civilized society, the modes of crime also multiplied; and the once venerable office of justice of the peace became at last too fatiguing and burdensome for people of opulence and distinction. Their unwillingness to accept of so heavy a charge obliged the ruling powers to apply to individuals of inferior character, who, in accepting of it, had an eye to the profits and emoluments arising from the exercise of their judicial powers. From the period when that honourable and weighty office was thus degraded, it lost, by degrees, the reverence in which it had been held. Venal and mercenary persons were appointed, whose base practices became so notorious, that they drew general odium and contempt both upon themselves and their functions. Hence the vilifying appellation of *a trading justice* was at last applied, with too much reason, to many of those who exercised that office. To rectify the abuses imputed to these, and to place the office itself on a footing of respectability proportionate to its importance, in the beginning of March a bill was introduced, with the countenance and approbation of government, into the lower house. Different offices were to be established in the metropolis, at a convenient distance from each other for the prompt administration of those parts of justice which are within the cognisance of ustices of the peace. Three justices were to sit in each

Justices of the peace.

Bill for the amendment of the London police.

of these offices, with a salary of 300*l.* a year to each: they were to be prohibited from taking fees individually; and the money from the fees paid into all the offices, was to be collected and applied to the payment of their salaries and official expenses. That the law might have a preventive operation as well as a penal, a clause was inserted vesting in constables a power to apprehend people who did not give a satisfactory account of themselves, and empowering the justices to commit them as vagabonds. There were, it appeared from evidence, large gangs of the most desperate villains, who were notorious thieves, lived by no other means than plunder, infested every street of the metropolis, and put the person and property of every individual passenger in danger every hour of the day and night. Various objections were made to the bill as an intrenchment on the liberty of the subject, and an increase of the power of the crown; but on investigation and inquiry, the necessity of it was found so strong as to overrule the arguments of its opponents, and it was passed by a considerable majority.

Humane and discriminate propositions of lord Rawdon for the relief of debtors and benefit of creditors,

WHILE these measures were adopted to secure the innocent and industrious against the profligate and atrocious, the wisely generous Rawdon resumed his efforts for affording relief to the unfortunate, by a revision of the laws relating to debtors and creditors. His lordship's general object was, on one hand to compel the debtor to give up all that he possessed, on the other to prevent the creditor, after such a cession of effects, from confining the debtor in jail for life. His lordship, with discriminating justice equal to the benevolence of his spirit, sought the reciprocal benefit of both debtor and creditor. He proposed that no man, to gratify a malignant disposition, should have it in his power to keep his fellow creature in perpetual imprisonment, merely on choosing to pay him four-pence a day; and that no man should continue in prison to the injury of his creditor, to revel in luxury on property which might pay his debts. As the subject was of very great importance, and required a full and minute discussion of principles, and a very nice discrimination of circumstances and cases, it was recommended to his lordship to postpone its introduction till the following

is postponed.

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session, by which time it might be maturely weighed; his lordship consenting, for the present withdrew the bill.

1792. Abolition of the slave trade is carried in the commons;

The slave trade this session again occupied the commons, and was also considered by the lords. In the lower house, the abolitionists having succeeded in the main question, were divided as to the time when the suppression should take place. At last, at the instance of messrs. Dundas and Addington, it was agreed that the trade should cease from the 1st of January, 1796. In the house of lords, the same arguments were used that had been employed on both sides by the commons.

is opposed in the lords. The duke of Clarence exhibits a masterly view of the various arguments, and opposes the abolition.

The duke of Clarence, who now, for the first time, spoke in the house of peers, made a very able, comprehensive, and impressive speech, against the abolition of the slave trade. This royal senator rejected all fanciful theories, argued from plain and stubborn facts, and took for his guide experience, the only unerring director of the statesman and lawgiver. Indeed his repeated orations on this subject exhibited and enforced every argument, from either humanity, justice, political and commercial expediency, that could be adduced; and his clear and manly reasonings constitute the most satisfactory and complete treatise which has hitherto appeared on that side of the question. The majority of the peers concurred with his highness in opposing the abolition, but the final determination of the question was postponed to the succeeding year.

State of the crown lands, especially forests.

Among the national objects which engrossed this session of parliament, was the state of our forests. Commissioners appointed to inspect the crown lands reported that the principal reservoir of materials for our navy, the New Forest in Hampshire, was in such a condition, that unless proper attention were bestowed immediately, there would be no timber fit for public service for many years; but that if adequate care were employed, in a short time it might yield a considerable quantity.

Mr. Pitt's bill for inclosing the New Forest, is rejected by the peers.

Impressed by their representations, Mr. Pitt proposed a bill to enclose certain parts of the New Forest, for promoting the growth of timber. Very strong objections were made to this proposition in the house of commons, of which many of the members professed to think it a job for the private emolument of Mr. Rose, secretary to the treasury, instead of a

national object. In the house of peers it was strongly reprobated, particularly by the lord chancellor, and was finally relinquished.

Bill of Mr. Dundas for facilitating the payment of wages and prize money to sailors.

MR. DUNDAS having in his official capacity, as treasurer of the navy, learned the many difficulties which, through their thoughtlessness and ignorance of business, our gallant supporters often experience in the recovery of their wages and prize money, introduced a bill to remove the obstacles, and prevent the frauds. When the bill was passed, Mr. Dundas sent a printed account of the spirit, tendency, and provisions of this new act, to all the parochial clergy in Britain, to be read from the pulpits, and explained to sailors and their connexions. Since that time the impostures which before were so frequently practised by personating individuals, forging wills, and other criminal artifices, are very rarely attempted.

Finance.

IN bringing forward his plan[c] of finance, Mr. Pitt showed the national revenue to be in such a favourable state, that a diminution of the public burdens might be reasonably expected. The taxes for the year 1791 had produced £16,730,000, exceeding the average of the last four years £500,000; after subtracting from which the sum total of the expenditures, which amounted by the reductions proposed to £15,811,000, the permanent income would exceed the permanent expense, including the million annually appropriated to the extinction of the national debt, by no less than £400,000. The supplies wanted for the present year would amount to £5,654,000, for which the means provided constituted a sum that exceeded the former by £37,000. From the foregoing statement, Mr. Pitt was of opinion, that the surplus would enable government to take off such taxes as bore chiefly on the poorer classes, to the amount of one half of that sum; and to appropriate the other half to the diminution of the public debts. By the methods projected for the redemption of this debt, £25,000,000 would be paid off in the space of fifteen years; towards which the interest of the sums annually redeemed would be carried to the sinking fund, till the annual sum to be applied to the redemption of that

Prosperous state of commerce and revenue.

Prospect of farther reducing the debt and taxes.

c February 17th.

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debt amounted to £4,000,000. This favourable state of the finances arose from the actual prosperity of the nation, which, though arrived at an eminent degree, had not yet attained that summit of grandeur and felicity, that lay within the reach of its industry and manifold abilities. During the discussion on the ways and means, several severe strictures were made on the mischiefs of lotteries, in wasting the property and corrupting the morals of the lower classes. Ministers replied, that the lottery was a tax upon adventure, which would exist though it were not taxed, it was no reason to forbear a productive source of revenue, that its subject might be abused. Near the close of the session Mr. Dundas laid before the house his annual statement of the income and expenditure of British India. In the preceding session the surplus, after deducting all charges, was £1,409,000, applicable to the reduction of the company's debt, and to purchase an investment. The actual revenues of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, he stated at £7,350,000; the sum remaining, together with that which arose from the sale of imported goods, amounted to £591,000, from which deduction the interest paid at Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, the surplus of the whole was between three and £400,000. From a general review it appeared, that war with Tippoo Saib, and the interest of the debt had nearly exhausted the whole revenue of India, and the profits of the sales; and that a debt had been contracted of £1,782,328, arising from the purchase of investments. Notwithstanding the increase of the India debt, Mr. Dundas stated the affairs of the company to be on no worse a footing at the commencement of 1792, than at the commencement of 1791; and they had been improved at home by the payment of debts to the amount of £694,000, and by an increase of money in their treasury, amounting to £541,400. Thus after a war of eight months, the company's finances were only the worse by £276,000. On the 15th of June, the session terminated with a speech from the throne, in which his majesty, mentioning the state of affairs in Europe, declared his own intention to observe a strict neutrality.

Flourishing state of India finances.

WHILE so many important concerns both internal and continental interested the British nation, a war breaking

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in India, engaged a considerable share of the public attention. The peace of Mangalore, caused by the reduction of Tippoo Saib's strength, endured no longer than his deficiencies lasted. Inheriting the views and passions of his father, he sought the empire of India, and as a step to its attainment, the expulsion of the English, his most powerful rivals. For several years he had been collecting and disciplining large armies; and though hopeless of assistance, either from France or the native powers, was not afraid singly to provoke England to war. The English government in India, well informed of his designs, was sufficiently prepared for counteraction. Mr. Pitt's plan for the administration of the Indian territories, executed under the direction of Mr. Dundas, had corrected abuses, restored prosperity, and extended revenue through British India. Sir John Macpherson succeeded Mr. Hastings as governor general, and imitated in peace the plans of economy which his predecessor had concerted and executed, as firmly and constantly as was possibly consistent with the necessary expenditure of multiplied wars: he thereby surmounted the pecuniary difficulties in which the executive government was unavoidably involved. He liquidated the civil and military debts which had been incurred, and established such a system for reducing expenditure and improving income, as greatly facilitated the beneficial administration of the board of control. Lord Cornwallis being sent out to India, in spring 1786, and with the double appointment of governor general and commander in chief, arrived at Calcutta in September, and found the different presidencies in rising prosperity. He availed himself with moderation, firmness, and temper, of the best arrangements of his predecessors, and introduced several new regulations that contributed farther to the public welfare, including the security and happiness of the natives. In Madras and Bombay, affairs were proportionably flourishing; the British presidencies were also secured by a very powerful military force. The Nizam and the Mahrattas, as well as less considerable powers in the southern parts of the peninsula, were in alliance with the English. Such was the state of India when Tippoo Saib commenced hostilities by attacking our ally the rajah of Travancore,

1792. Political transactions in India.

Beneficial effects of Mr Pitt's legislative measures, and Mr. Dundas's executive management

Sir John Macpherson governor general,

able and successful administration of.

He is succeeded by lord Cornwallis, who proceeds in plans of comprehensive improvement.

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1792. Tippoo Saib recruits his strength. He attacks the rajah of Travancore. War, and invasion of Mysore.

whose dominions the English had guaranteed with Tippoo's consent, at the late peace. The council of Madras remonstrated, and attempted amicable mediation, but to no purpose. Bound in honour and justice to protect our ally, the supreme government of Bengal declared war against the sultan of Mysore. In June 1790, general Meadows from the Carnatic, invaded Tippoo's dominions, while general Abercrombie from the west, having conquered Cannamore, advanced towards Seringapatam. Tippoo, with masterly skill, eluded all Meadows' ablest efforts to bring him to battle, and after a long and tiresome succession of marches and countermarches, with several skirmishes, the English general was obliged by the rainy season to return to Madras. Nor were Abercrombie's exertions after the reduction of Cannamore during the first campaign, attended with any decisive efforts. Though the campaign in all its operations, very honourably displayed British valour and conduct, yet it did not answer expectations, and lord Cornwallis himself judged it expedient to take the field the following year. In March 1791, he proceeded to Mysore by the Eastern Ghauts; and having surmounted the passes, he attacked Bangalore, the second city of the Mysorean empire. Tippoo marched to its relief: for so important an object ventured a pitched battle, was defeated, and the town was taken by storm. Lord Cornwallis now proceeded towards the capital of Mysore, whither Abercrombie was also advancing with the western army. In the month of May he arrived in the neighbourhood of Seringapatam, where he found Tippoo very strongly posted, and protected in front and flank by swamps and mountains: not deterred by these difficulties, the British general attacked the enemy, and though the Mysoreans made a very gallant resistance, entirely defeated them, and compelled them to seek shelter under the guns of the capital. The sun was about to set when the victorious English, pursuing the enemy, first beheld Seringapatam rising upon an island, in all the splendour of Asiatic magnificence, decorated with sumptuous buildings, encircled by most beautiful gardens, and defended by strong and extensive fortifications. The grand object of their pursuit now appeared to the English within their immediate grasp: but disasters

Campaign of 1790, indecisive.

1791, lord Cornwallis invades Mysore, and comes within sight of Seringapatam;

which no foresight could have anticipated, and no wisdom could have prevented, now obstructed its attainment. A covering army was necessary while they were carrying on the siege, both for supporting their operations, and for commanding the country, to secure the conveyance of provisions. When lord Cornwallis set out on this expedition, he had trusted to the cooperation of the Mahrattas, but was disappointed. Still expecting general Abercrombie, he marched up the Cavery, to secure and facilitate the advance of the western army; but the river suddenly swelling, rendered the junction of the two armies impracticable. The troops from Bombay reluctantly yielding to necessity, departed for the western coast, exposed to all the fury of the monsoon which was then raging on the Malabar side of the mountains. Cornwallis having halted some days to cover the retreat of the other army, deemed it expedient to defer the siege of Seringapatam till the following campaign, and spent the remainder of the season in reducing the interjacent country and forts, securing communication with the allies, preparing plentiful supplies of provision, and making other dispositions for commencing the investment as soon as the monsoon should be over. The most difficult and most important acquisitions during the remainder of this campaign, were Nundydroog, the capital of a rich district, and Savendroog, or the Rock of Death, a fortress which commanded a great part of the country between Bangalore and Seringapatam. Early in 1792, the Nizam and the Mahrattas joined the British army, now on its march; and on the 5th of February, the British host once more appeared before Tippoo's capital. On the 7th, soon after midnight, they attacked the sultan's lines, forced his camp, gained a complete victory, and compelled him to confine himself within the city. The Bombay army now arriving, a junction was effected between Abercrombie and the commander in chief, and the city was invested on every side. Seringapatam has the form of a triangle almost isoskeles: two sides are washed by the river, while the third is joined to the country. On this, the western side, as naturally the most accessible, the fortifications are the strongest: aware of this circumstance, the British general instead of directing his main attack

is prevented by the floods of the Cavery from investing the metropolis of Mysore.

In 1792, he besieges Seringapatam.

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1792.

Tippoo sues for peace, and obtains it at the dictation of lord Cornwallis.

from the island, resolved to make his assault across the river. The trenches were open, the siege was advancing with great rapidity, and dispositions were made for commencing an immediate assault. The sultan seeing himself hemmed in on every side, importuned by the people to terminate the war, and fearing sedition if he refused, at last sued for peace, which was granted him on the following conditions: first, that he should cede one half of his dominions to the allied powers; secondly, that he should pay three crores, and thirty lacks of rupees;[f] thirdly, that he should unequivocally restore all the prisoners which had been taken by the Mysoreans from the time of Hyder Ally; and fourthly, that two of his three eldest sons should be delivered up as hostages for the due performance of the treaty. Agreeably to these terms, the treasure began to be carried to the British camp, and on the 26th, the young princes were conducted to lord Cornwallis. This ceremony was performed with great pomp: meanwhile Tippoo made some attempts to retard the execution of the treaty, but lord Cornwallis issuing orders for recommencing the siege, he submitted to all the British demands; and the peace was finally concluded on the 19th of March. Thus ended a war which delivered the company from the dangers to which it was exposed, by the inveterate hostility of the most powerful of its neighbours; constantly inclined from interest and connexion, to unite with France. The territories of which Tippoo was divested, were divided between the three allied powers, in three equal portions. This act of good faith to our allies, and the separate arrangements made by lord Cornwallis with the nabobs of Oude and the Carnatic, as well as the principal native rajahs, left a very honourable and advantageous impression of British justice on the memory of the natives. Lord Cornwallis and general Meadows, with great generosity, resigned their share of the plunder to the rest of the army. His lordship having reduced this potent enemy, turned his attention to the improvement of the territory which had been ceded by the sultan of Mysore. Several British gentlemen had applied themselves to the study of the oriental languages,

Generous conduct of his lordship respecting prize money.

[f] About 4,125,000*l.*

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1792. Measures of for the improvement of India.

and by this means had become acquainted with the history and customs of the natives. Among other valuable information, they had learned the ancient mode of collecting the revenues throughout India. By conversancy in the Persian and Indostan tongues, both civil and military officers discovered that the system of collection in Mysore was extremely productive, without oppressing the inhabitants; and that its chief advantage arose from the imposts being fixed, so that accounts were simplified, and the oppressions of intermediate agents were not suffered to exist. His lordship, from the knowledge which he had acquired concerning Indian systems of finance, extended his improvements to Bengal, and other settlements in India.[g]

g See Annual Register, 1792.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.


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